Nous Christou and Communal Transformation: A Rhetorical and Literary Reading of 1 Cor 2:16

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INTRODUCTION

The history of interpretation of the phrase *nous Christou*, which Paul employs in 1 Cor 2:16, mainly focuses on tracing the Hellenistic influence on his writings. No doubt, the Greek language Paul employs in explaining the gospel and the dominant culture of his world make this scholarly proclivity a credible one. But Paul, being a faithful Jew and a creative writer, is capable of appealing to his rich and diverse religious heritage, and his literary ingenuity to communicate his message. This angle of interpretation is seldom explored in discussing the *nous Christou*. In this thesis, I will make three modest claims: first, I will argue that the *nous Christou* is a product of Paul's ingenious use of multiple religious and philosophical traditions to expound the good news, and to address the pressing issues at Corinth. This means that the *nous Christou* is not merely an importation from Hellenistic philosophy, but is a conflation of several traditions: the LXX, Greek philosophy, and Paul's literary ingenuity. Emma Wasserman aptly captures this reading: "Paul … [is] a producer of a highly creative synthesis of multiple traditions."[1] I will also suggest that Paul's idea of *nous* is congruous with the various nuances found in the LXX. But the special impetus he gives the concept (i.e., Spirit-inspired mindset) is analogous to the animating role of *nous* in philosophy. "The Spirit" and Greek philosophy's "*nous*," however, are not interchangeable. But in the context of 1 Cor 2:16, Paul imbues the *nous Christou* with the Spirit making its role comparable to the *nous* in secular Greek literature—that is, to the Demiurge. Another obvious ground for comparison is the ontological nature of the *nous Christou* in the *ekklēsia* and the Spirit's role in "perfecting" the assembly in the image of Christ. Both are well-known themes in Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism.

[1] Emma Wasserman, "Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide? The Case of Pauline Anthropology in Romans 7 and 2 Corinthians 4—5," in Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts (eds.), *Christian Origins and Hellenistic Judaism: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament* (Leiden: Boston, 2013), 278.

Second, I will define the controverted *nous Christou* as a Spirit-inspired, Christ-like mindset that ontologically characterizes the *ekklēsia* as Christ's body, and makes Christ concretely present in the assembly. This mouthful definition contains five indispensable elements: Spirit-inspired, Christ-like mindset, ontological, *ekklēsia*, and concrete presence. "Spirit-inspired" implies that the *nous Christou* is not simply a "mindset" that the *ekklēsia* imbibes from listening to the gospel. Rather, the *nous Christou* is a "mindset" that is instilled into the *ekklēsia* by the Spirit in order to empower the assembly to comprehend the mysteries of God. "Mindset" suggests that the *nous Christou* is not simply interchangeable with the Spirit, but is a peculiar way of living that emanates from a characteristic ontological feature. Most important, it is an ethically informed decision-making process that springs from the *ekklēsia*'s ontological character. The inclusion of mindset is a judgment on Paul's influence: the LXX. "Ontological" alludes to Paul's Hellenistic world. The *nous Christou* is not just a way of thinking, but is an intrinsic feature that marks the *ekklēsia* as a part of Christ. *Ekklēsia* houses the *nous Christou*. It also emphasizes the communal character of the *nous Christou*. Paul is primarily addressing the *ekklēsia*. The individuals, because they are a part of the *ekklēsia*, participate in this Spirit-inspired mindset. Christ's concrete presence highlights the main objective of the *nous Christou*. This purpose is critical to the third part of my thesis: *nous Christou* (though occurring once) underlies all of Paul's responses to the *ekklēsia* in Corinth. My insight into Christ's concrete presence is based on Paul's directive in 1 Cor 5:3. Here, Paul invites the *ekklēsia* to summon his spirit (since he was absent) to its gathering. He argues that when his spirit is among them, they will be able to act in accordance with his will. By extension, the Spirit makes Christ concretely present in the *ekklēsia*. My third assertion is that *nous Christou* foregrounds all the responses of Paul to the issues besieging the church at Corinth. My argument is anchored in a profound and thorough understanding of *nous Christou* as a Spirit-inspired mindset that ontologically marks the *ekklēsia* as a part of Christ. Hence, albeit

nous Christou occurs only once in First Corinthians, I will argue that Paul's formulaic delineation of the *ekklēsia* in Corinth as "God's field and building," "the Spirit's temple," and the "Christ's body" are valid angles to the multifaceted reality of having the *nous Christou*. My claim will also be founded on the solution that Paul proffers for each of the problems: the recognition of the *ekklēsia* as Christ's body. Thus, even in passages where the assembly is not called Christ's body outright, I will argue that this mindset governs Paul's exhortations and condemnations. My fundamental presupposition in these claims is that Paul's conviction about Christ, the Spirit, and the *ekklēsia* is consistent, and it cuts across the entire letter. Next, I will explain the tasks outlined for each chapter.

In chapter one, I will investigate the use of *nous* in the socio-religious milieu of Paul: the LXX, Middle Platonism, Philo, Josephus, and Neoplatonism. I will study the evolution of the concept, its nuances, and its application in the different philosophical traditions. The aim here is to ascertain the traditions that underlie Paul's *nous Christou*. Although the LXX will be the primary text for my study of Paul's religious influence, I will compare its instances of *nous* with the MT's *lev*. When there is an irreconcilable variation in texts, my preferred reading will be the LXX for these reasons: it features *nous* (the term being investigated), it is the version of Scripture that Paul presumably used, and it is supposedly based on an older Hebrew manuscript that is non-extant. Since *nous* frequently translates the Hebrew *lev*, I will offer some reasons for the LXX translators' choice of *nous* for *lev* instead of the proper Greek word for heart, *kardia*. Without doing an in-depth study of the Hebrew *lev* (which would be another thesis), I will describe the noticeable pattern in my assessment of all the instances of *nous* in the LXX. In studying the occurrences of *nous* in the Hebrew Scriptures, I will divide the LXX into two parts: the proto-canonical and the deuterocanonical books. My decision to analyze the instances of *nous* in the LXX in this way is not based on the subsequent appropriation of the deuterocanonical books (which is not the concern of this thesis). Rather, it is founded on the

peculiar Greek origin of these books. As such, the authors who employed this concept were not simply translating *lev* into Greek, but were using the term with a unique Hellenistic sense. My study of the LXX's usage will be attentive to this possibility without dismissing the likelihood of an identical usage between both books: proto-canonical and deuterocanonical.

In presenting the Middle Platonists' view of *nous*, I will particularly expose the views of four adherents of this school of thought: Antiochus, Posidonius, Plutarch, and Albinus. My exposé of these Middle Platonists' idea of *nous* is not designed to be an exhaustive treatise on this philosophical trend, but is intended to be representative of this philosophy. As such, it suffices to make a judgment on Paul's probable influence, if need be. Philo, though a staunch advocate of this philosophy, will be treated separately, because of his special Jewish heritage: he has a common ground with Paul. In discussing Philo's use of *nous*, I will explore his unique hermeneutical adaptation of Greek philosophy in explicating the Hebrew Scriptures. His philosophical reading of the Torah will be invaluable in establishing Paul's underlying philosophy of the *nous Christou*. After Philo, I will examine Josephus's use of *nous*, which is also highly significant, because of his Jewish heritage—a common ground with Paul. Being a historian, Josephus offers an alternative way of using *nous* that is purely secular. This study will attempt to situate Paul's *nous Christou* in the Jewish philosophical tradition, or in the Jewish secular-cum-religious tradition. After Josephus, I will examine the concept of *nous* in Neoplatonism. Albeit this philosophical tradition attains its apogee two centuries after Paul, I will treat its use of *nous*, because its foundation might be traceable to the first century. Besides, a broad stroke on the philosophical traditions that would have influenced Paul demands a study of all notable philosophies in the world of his time (before and after his era). In discussing Neoplatonism, individual adherents will not be given any attention. Rather, the focus will be on the philosophy's understanding and explanation of the role of the *nous* in the creation of the world and its connection to the One. In chapter two, I will investigate the concept of *nous* in

the undisputed letters, the disputed letters, and its appearance in Luke and Revelation. The different nuances Paul gives the term in the undisputed letters will be critically evaluated, and its correlation to the disputed letters and to Luke and Revelation will be thoroughly defined. Here, I will offer a provisional definition for the *nous Christou* in the light of Paul's creative and ingenious use of multiple traditions. This definition indicates my understanding of the *nous Christou*, the role it plays in the *ekklēsia* of First Corinthians, and the traditions that influenced Paul. So *nous Christou*, if rightly understood, is not a once-off terminology. Rather, it foregrounds each Pauline claim regarding the *ekklēsia*, especially his responses to the abuses reported to him. But my claim in this thesis will be a modest one: *nous Christou* underlies all of Paul's responses to the issues facing the church at Corinth.

In chapter three, I will indicate the ethical relevance of the *nous Christou*. I will also x-ray the structure of Paul's responses, paying close attention to three main components: complaints, metaphors, and solutions offered. In discussing these key parts of Paul's replies, I will argue that his description of the problem bespeaks the absence of the *nous Christou*; his metaphor for the *ekklēsia* describes the possession of the *nous Christou*; and his solution to these issues reveals an act of genuine witness by an *ekklēsia* that has the *nous Christou*. Mindful that First Corinthians is not a Pauline treatise on the *nous Christou*, I will say that this connection is often implied or suggested. But if my description of the *nous Christou* is adhered to, this conclusion becomes logical and inevitable. Albeit this work focuses on First Corinthians, its conclusion can easily be extended to Paul's other letters, because his conviction about Christ, the Spirit, and the *ekklēsia* remains the same throughout his letters. These three elements are integral pillars of Paul's evangelization.

From the standpoint of methodology, this thesis will feature four chapters with the following captions: "*Nous* in Paul's Socio-Religious Milieu" (chapter one), "*Nous* in Paul's Letters and in the NT" (chapter two), "*Nous Christou* as the Source of Communal

Transformation" (chapter three), and the conclusion (chapter four). The default biblical text for all English citations will be the NRSV. The English citations from the LXX will be based on the landmark translation of Lancelot C. L. Brenton, who based his work on the Vaticanus, a fourth-century manuscript of the LXX. In places where the Greek text appeared mutilated and corrupted, he augmented it with Alexandrinus, a fifth-century manuscript. The NRSV is retained for the English translations of the MT. Besides this, any other biblical text used will be properly indicated. In special situations and for emphasis, the author's translation might also be used.

CHAPTER ONE

NOUS IN PAUL'S SOCIO-RELIGIOUS MILIEU

Most studies on Paul's use of *nous* focus on his immediate Hellenistic environment: Greek philosophy and literature, and the Pauline letters themselves. As such, these scholarly efforts are geared toward tracing the influence of Neoplatonism on Paul or his noticeable divergence from such philosophical trends. In this chapter, however, we will adopt a broader perspective to Paul's context by studying his socio-religious milieu: the Septuagint (LXX), Middle Platonism, Philo's works, Josephus's writings, and Neoplatonism.[2] This study will explore the different traditions featuring *nous*; it will also identify the usage that is analogous to Paul's and those unrelated to it. The LXX's use of *nous* will be the pith of this chapter, since Paul appealed to it copiously in his letters. The LXX will be treated in two parts: the proto-canonical books and the deuterocanonical books. The decision to treat the deuterocanonical books separately is not based on the subsequent appropriation of these books into the Bible (a theme that is not the immediate concern of this thesis), but on their uniquely Greek origin. Since their attested existence was first (and, in some cases, only) in Greek, their use of traditional Greek concepts, like *nous*, will naturally have a genuinely Hellenistic flavor.

A look at the occurrences of *nous* in the proto-canonical books clearly shows that the LXX consistently translates the Hebrew *lev* either as *kardia* or *nous*. *Lev* has a wide spectrum of meanings: (1) it refers to a physical organ; (2) it is the seat of judgment; (3) it denotes human reason (*nous*); and (4) it is the seat of conscience.[3] *Lev* seems to be the most important organ

[2] These traditions listed are not exhaustive, but represent the dominant trends in the history of *nous* in the Greek-speaking world.

[3] *Lev* as a "physical organ": Bell claims that *lev* has this meaning in the Hebrew Scriptures. Richard Bell, "'But We Have the Mind of Christ': Some Theological and Anthropological Reflections on 1 Corinthians 2:16," in Stanley E. Porter and Matthew R. Malcolm (eds.), *Horizons in Hermeneutics: A Festschrift in Honor of Anthony C. Thiselton* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013); *Lev* as "the seat of conscience": The classical biblical reference for this idea is Joel 2:12-13: "… Return to me [the Lord] with all your heart (*lev*), with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts (*lev*) and not your clothing…."

in a human being from the standpoint of religion: it makes conversion possible. Among these strands of meanings, the LXX has reserved the thinking faculty, or meanings related to thought, for *nous*. The argument I want to set forth in this section is that the LXX renders *lev* as *nous* when at least one of these conditions is present: first, the reference is to a rational process, like thought, plan, or understanding; second, *lev* is used figuratively in the Hebrew text—when it does not suggest a spatial or physical concept; and third, the operative verb in the sentence implies some rational activity. These established categories are not meant to be strict pigeonholes for *nous* in the proto-canonical books, but are helpful groupings for each instance that will be analyzed below.

The other argument I intend to set forth is that Paul's use of *nous* was influenced by the tradition that gave birth to the LXX and Josephus's writings; however, his implicit use of the Spirit that inspires and animates the *nous Christou* is parallel to the divine *nous* in Greek philosophy.[4] Thus, as I shall argue in the next chapter, Paul's *nous Christou* is a coalescing of the LXX's and Josephus's ideas of *nous* (the term) and that of Greek philosophy (something ethereal). Paul uses the LXX's term and imbues it with a transcendental notion identical to that of Hellenistic philosophy. This explains why scholars disagree on how to interpret Paul's *nous Christou*. Since the *nous Christou* will be discussed in the ensuing chapter, I will focus on setting forth these traditions clearly in this chapter. The sequence for studying *nous* in the LXX will be: the historical books, the prophetic writings, and the wisdom literature.

Nous in the Proto-canonical Books

[4] My argument is not that the *nous* in Greek philosophy is interchangeable with the Spirit in Paul, but rather that the similarity between both concepts will shed light on one's grasp of the *nous Christou*. I am also not making nor do I intend to make a claim in favor of Paul's conscious use of Greek philosophy. All I am saying is that *nous* in Greek philosophy (in the context of *nous Christou*) functions like the Spirit in Paul.

The first use of *nous* in the LXX occurs in the plague narrative in Exod 7:23. The text reads: "Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart (*nous*)." The things Pharaoh refused to think about were the things Moses and Aaron told him. Pharaoh's heart (*kardia*) remained hardened and he did not think (*nous*) about the incident. Beginning with this text is important for two reasons: first, the Hebrew text uses *lev* throughout; second, whenever the Hebrew verb *hazaq* (to harden) is used for the heart, the LXX translates it as *kardia*; but whenever *śît* (to set) is used with *lev*, the latter is rendered as *nous*. For the LXX translators, the meaning of *lev* in each passage can only be determined when it is taken alongside the operative verb. Hence, the "hardening" of the heart (which connotes a physical organ) refers to the Greek *kardia*, while the "setting" of the heart on something (figurative expression) denotes *nous*. Although in modern English the "hardening" of and the "setting" of the heart on something are both figurative expressions, in the Hebrew world of 250 BCE, it was not. Hardening refers to a physical organ of decision-making, while setting one's heart on something is a metaphorical use of that same physical organ for some rational activity. This distinction is implied in the choice of a different Greek word for *lev* whenever the verb suggests thought. This use of *nous* meets all three aforementioned criteria: thought, figurative usage, and operative verb. It is also a singular example, because it features the nuances in the Hebrew understanding of the human heart.

In Josh 14:7, Joshua recounts his espionage in the land of Kadesh-Barnea, which was sanctioned by Moses. The text reads: "I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him an honest report." This biblical text has two variants: is it according to "his mind" (LXX) or "my mind" (MT)? I am inclined to the LXX's reading (for reasons earlier stated), because it is in accordance with good reporting: communicating to the satisfaction of the sender. This is effective reporting. Thus, for Joshua to report to Moses, according to the latter's mind, means speaking to him

honestly about the espionage. Joshua is not expected to tell Moses what he thinks ("my mind"), but to report "honestly" what he had seen, in accordance to Moses' expectation ("his mind"). The NRSV's translation here is excellent: "I brought him an honest report." This translation is important, because it emphasizes the objectivity of Joshua's report, unlike that of the other spies that instilled fear in the hearts of the people: "But my companions who went up with me made the heart (*kardia*) of the people melt (Josh 14:8).[5]

Because of the divergent connotations of *lev* in both contexts, the LXX translates the first as *nous* and the second as *kardia*. In the first, the reference was to "faithful, honest, or objective" reporting; while, in the second, *lev* bespeaks a physical organ. The NRSV says that the report of "the brothers" made the people's hearts melt. While this is a good translation, the verb in question is *hamas* (to cause violence). Hence, a better reading would be that the people were frightened by "the brothers'" report, unlike that of Joshua which seemingly was honest and encouraging, since it gave them a chance to capture the land. Looking at our three categories once again, this use of *nous* fulfills two of them: thinking process and figurative use of the heart.

Moving on to the prophetic writings, it is noteworthy to state that all occurrences of *nous* in prophetic literature are found in Isaiah. In Isa 10:7, *lev* is used twice in the Hebrew text: the first is translated as *psychē*, while the second is rendered as *nous*. Neither of the two instances of *lev* connotes a physical organ, because the first is governed by verbs of thinking, *damah* (to consider) and *hasav* (to think), while the second is synonymous with a plan or purpose. The text reads: "But this is not what he intends, nor does he have this in mind (*lev*); but it is in his heart (*lev*) to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few." Both could have been rendered as *nous*, but the translators chose to assign *psychē* to the first, and *nous* to the second.

[5] *Kardia* is once again depicted as having physical qualities. In this context, it is likened to wax.

This idea of *nous* coheres with the earlier noted categories: it is synonymous with plan or purpose; the operative verb suggests a thinking process; and *lev* is used figuratively. The later part of this verse presents textual variations: the LXX says, "but his mind (*nous*) shall change, and that to destroy not a few nations," while the MT says, "his purpose is to destroy; to put an end to not a few nations." The LXX considers *lev* to be alterable—it alludes to a thought process. Hence, it regards *lev* as God's "mindset" or "intention." Once again, the LXX chooses *nous*, because *lev* denotes a thought process.

Nous appears again in Isa 10:12: "…He [God] will punish the arrogant boasting of the king of Assyria and his haughty pride." The LXX translates the Hebrew phrase *godel levav* ("pride of heart") as *ton noun ton megan* ("arrogant mind"). Looking at the Hebrew parallel of "heart" and "eyes," one would think that the reference here is to a physical organ. However, other intervening aspects in the sentence favor the LXX's decision: "*fruit* of a proud heart" and "*glory* of haughty eyes." The parallel here is a figurative expression for repugnant arrogance. This poetic use of words is a characteristic feature of First Isaiah. The LXX translators, recognizing Isaiah's poetic device, preferred *nous*, since the text referred to the heart metaphorically. Isaiah 40:13 is the famous passage Paul cites just before his emphatic conclusion: "But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). The use of *nous* here is quite unusual, because the Hebrew noun is *ruah* (breath or spirit); and, up until now, *ruah* has not been rendered as *nous*. Thus our bewilderment: Why did the LXX not translate *ruah* as *pneuma*—the obvious Greek equivalent? There are three clues in this verse, which indicate that *ruah* is not a physical entity in this context, but a metaphorical one. The clues are the phrases: "who understood," "his counsel," and "who instructed him." These phrases suggest an ongoing rational activity. The verbs "to understand" and "to instruct" normally depict teaching and learning, and are classic rational activities, while the noun "counsel" denotes a plan, or thought process. If combined, the sentence speaks about the surpassing wisdom of God's plan, purpose,

or design. I will now examine some instances of *ruah* in Second Isaiah, where the LXX renders it as *pneuma*.

The LXX uses *pneuma* in Isa 42:1. Here *pneuma* is used as a divine principle that enables God's servant to bring justice to the nations. It denotes not just God's thought (*nous*), but the principle of God's intervention in the history of the chosen people. Isaiah 42:5 uses *pneuma* in a similar fashion. It communicates a parallel idea as "breath." The last part of the verse speaks of "breath to the people" and "spirit to those who walk in it." These phrases refer to the same thing: the principle through which God sustains humans. It is interesting to note the following characteristics of the LXX's use of *pneuma*: (1) it originates from God; and (2) it is imparted upon humans to fulfill God's design. These features are reechoed in Isa 44:3: "I will pour out my spirit on your offspring." Given the LXX's nuanced and consistent use of *pneuma*, Isa 40:13 falls short of these noticeable characteristics and is thus rendered as *nous*, since its focus is on God's plan or thought process. Let us now return to *nous*.

The MT of Isa 41:22 employs the cohortative with *lev*. The text reads: "Let us place our heart." The LXX takes this statement as a metaphor and thus has rendered it as "we will make the mind alert." In line with this figurative sense, most translations say: "That we may consider them." The operative verb here is also suggestive of a metaphor: "to place" in the heart. From what we have already seen, *lev* is translated as *nous* whenever the reference is to a thought process, a figurative use of the heart, or the operative verb suggests this. I shall now examine the use of *nous* in the wisdom literature.

Proverbs 29:7 has some textual variants. The MT reads: "The righteous knows how to give judgment to the poor; the wicked has no knowledge of this [judgment in favor of the poor]." The LXX significantly differs: "The righteous knows how to judge [in favor of] the poor, but the impious does not understand this, and the poor does not have this discerning mind (*nous*)." The last phrase of the LXX gives us more information about the poor person: he does

not realize that the wicked is not interested in his welfare. *Nous* here evokes a mental process: the poor is not able "to discern" (to assess the situation critically) the intention of the wicked. This use of *nous* concurs with the established pattern. Proverbs 31:3 presents another textual variation. The MT reads: "Do not give your strength (or wealth) to women, and your ways to (those) who blot out kings." The second part of this verse in the LXX is slightly different: "and (do not give) your mind and life to regret." Textual issues aside, the Greek term translated as "regret" (*hysteroboulia*) has the idea of a "deliberation" after an event has occurred. To deliberate is to think, so the LXX has chosen the apt word to express this: *nous*.

Job 7:17 reinforces the figurative use of *nous*. The MT and LXX agree on this verse. The MT states: "That you place your heart toward him," while the LXX reads: "That you give thought to him." Either way, *nous* implies thought. Job 7:20 presents a minor textual variation: whereas the MT says "watcher of humans," the LXX reads, "the one who discovers the mind (*nous*) of humans." Interestingly, the MT does not use the word *lev*; but the LXX supplies *nous* because the context connotes thought. Discovering the "mind" of humans is equivalent to knowing their "thoughts." This implies a mental activity: how humans think. Again, this use corroborates the three criteria above. Job 33:16 underscores the metaphorical idea of *nous*. The MT reads: "At that time, he (God) will open the ear of humanity," while the LXX has: "Then, he opens the mind of humans." The LXX perceived "ear" to be a metaphor for the human capacity to listen. Thus it rendered the expression as the "mind of humanity." The Tanakh also translates this as opening "men's understanding." *Nous* indicates a thinking process: understanding. *Nous* in Job 36:19 has no corollary in the MT. The beginning of the verse in the LXX reads: "Lest your willing mind of prayer deviate in distress," while the MT has "will your wealth keep you from distress?" In the LXX's wording, *nous* means "mindset" of prayer. Hence, a figurative sense is intended here. This use of *nous* is slightly nuanced and differs from our proposal. But a case can be made for "thought" or "understanding" evolving into a

"mindset." In summary, *nous* refers to a figurative use of the heart; it delineates a mental (thought) process, and is often used with verbs that imply thinking. I shall now look at the deuterocanonical books.

Nous in the Deuterocanonical Books

The deuterocanonical books contain a consistent idea of the *nous*: mind or a rational activity. Due to the Greek repertoire of speculative vocabulary, *nous* in these writings seldom has a figurative sense—metaphor for the human heart. For instance, when Ezra read aloud the law to the hearing of the multitude present, the last part of the sentence reads: "And all the multitude gave [their] mind (*nous*) to the law" (1 Esd 9:41). *Nous* here means thought. The RSV reads: "All the multitude paid attention to the law." The RSV stresses the concentration of the throng using: "gave their mind to." In Jdt 8:14, *nous* denotes God's thought. It reads: "… and know his (God's) mind and comprehend his reasoning." *Nous* in this verse describes God's thought or "reasoning." This notion of *nous* totally agrees with the others.

Wisdom 4:12 continues this idea of *nous*. It reads: "For the fascination of wickedness obscures what is good, and roving desire perverts the innocent mind (*nous*)." *Nous* here is synonymous with mindset. The "innocent mind" refers to a naïve person's disposition toward the lures of wickedness. Wisdom 9:15 reiterates this: "For the perishable body weighs down the soul, and this earthly tent burdens the thoughtful mind (*nous*)." *Nous* here is a mental activity. In the Susanna story, Daniel levels three accusations against the two wicked elders: (1) perversion of minds; (2) refusal think divinely; and (3) unwillingness to recall righteous judgments (Sus 1:9). *Nous* in this verse retains the idea of a mindset: a way of thinking. This usage agrees with the others. I shall now look at *nous* in the books of Maccabees that feature about half of the word's occurrences in the deuterocanonical books.

In 2 Macc 15:8, Judas Maccabeus urged his militia not to fear the attack of the Gentiles, "but to keep in mind (*nous*) the former times when help came from the heavens." The function of *nous* here is recalling: mental activity.[6] Third Maccabees 1:25 speaks of the elders closest to the king "trying to change his arrogant mind (*nous*) from the plot he had conceived." This instance of *nous* addresses the king's arrogant way of thinking (mindset). *Nous* is used with *epiboule* (plot) and *enthumeomai* (to consider). Here *nous* means thought.

Fourth Maccabees 2:22 features *nous* with a distinctly philosophical undertone. It speaks of "the enthronement of the mind (*nous*) over the senses, as a sacred governor over them all." This *nous* does not simply mean thought, but is given a philosophical task over the bodily senses. The ensuing verse buttresses this reading when it says: "To this (the mind) he gave the law; and one who lives subject to this will rule a kingdom that is temperate, just, good, and courageous." This argumentation is reminiscent of the great Greek philosophers—Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. It is also characteristic of Plotinus and Philo. Fourth Maccabees 5:11 carries on this philosophical flavor of *nous*. Although *nous* in this verse is parallel to mindset, it has a philosophical nuance. *Nous* also denotes the discernment the truth. Truth is used in a sublime sense, somewhat different from the basic, traditional Hebrew idea of constancy. In 4 Macc 16:13, the mother of the seven sons who were put to death was described as "having an adamant mind (*nous*)," which can be paraphrased as a resilient disposition toward adversity. While *nous* was parallel to mindset or disposition, the philosophical atmosphere of this book is remarkably different from that of the proto-canonical books. There is philosophizing about immortality, death, human passions, and the primacy and preeminence of *nous* over other senses—all concepts that were the preoccupation of the Greek thinkers.

In the deuterocanonical books, *nous* is consistently used to depict one's disposition, mindset, or worldview. *Nous* describes a person's way of thinking that was subject to a moral

[6] *Lev* is used figuratively in this sentence.

judgment, either positive or negative. In some contexts, *nous* delineates the actual mind itself and other rational processes. In 4 Macc, *nous* assumes a Greek philosophical coloration. *Nous* here is regarded as the chair of the bodily senses, a familiar theme in Hellenistic philosophy. These notions of *nous* are palpably different from those of the proto-canonical books. *Nous* in 4 Macc is accorded some priority in describing a person's disposition. Given the heightening philosophical undertone of *nous* with the progression in timeline, one might argue that the later biblical authors became more at home with some Hellenistic categories in expressing the *nous*. I shall now turn to Middle Platonism.

Nous in Middle Platonism

Middle Platonism refers to the Greco-Roman philosophy that spanned 80 BCE to 220 CE. It focuses on the application of classical Greek philosophy to pertinent issues of this era. The renowned philosophers in this epoch include Antiochus, Posidonius, Plutarch, Albinus, and Philo. The latter's view on *nous* will be discussed separately. Middle Platonism's idea of the *nous* is greatly influenced by theories of cosmology, emanation, and creation. The Middle Platonists generally accept the existence of a Supreme Being or a transcendent One who gave life to the universe. They also believe that the transcendent One or Primal God created the world through an intermediary who makes the being of the inaccessible One manifest to the universe. This intermediary being is called the Demiurge. Some of these Middle Platonists describe the Demiurge as a World Soul, Intellect, agent or logos of the Supreme Being. Some even called it a second God.[7] Most important, they identify the Demiurge as the *nous* of the transcendent One. The Demiurge is regarded as the transcendent One's *nous*, because it is the principle through which the latter reveals itself to the world. The Demiurge bears the imprint

[7] John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 BC to AD 220* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 7.

of orderliness and being of the transcendent One. These characteristics of the Supreme Being are imposed on creatures through the mediation of the Demiurge. The universe retains the imprint of the Demiurge which is the created *nous*, distinct from the uncreated *nous* in the Demiurge. Through the created *nous*, the world remains in contact with the transcendent One who sustains it and perfects it. Middle Platonists, however, disagree on the fine details of this theory. I will now present the nuances given to this theory by some adherents of this school.

Antiochus says that the human soul has two parts: rational (*nous*) and irrational parts (the senses). The rational part is the agent, while the irrational part is the instrument. *Nous* coordinates, organizes and uses the senses as an instrument for interacting with and reaching out to the world. Antiochus says that *nous* is the source of the senses because it animates and directs them.[8] His discussion centers on the immanent or created *nous* in human beings. It is also noteworthy to say that Antiochus adopts the Platonic division of the human soul: rational (*nous*) and irrational.[9] The main difference is his emphasis on a bipartite structure instead of the Platonic tripartite.[10] Posidonius's view differs from that of Antiochus. Whereas the latter speaks of an immanent *nous* that orders the senses, the former argues for a transcendent *nous* comparable to the heavens. Posidonius's claims are founded on his peculiar creation theory. He holds that there are two foundational principles in the universe: active (God) and passive (matter). The imposition of divine being on matter engenders creation, while the withdrawal of the same leads to disintegration. Divine being is found in every creature in the universe. Indeed, it is the soul of all life. Posidonius's theory is pantheistic. Divine being is the entire universe. God is a "fiery and intelligent spirit" that takes up the shape of any creature desired.[11] The universe is not distinct from God, but is a part of divine being. Stratification in the cosmos is a

[8] Ibid., 67.

[9] Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 102.

[10] Plato identifies three parts of the soul: the rational, sentient and vegetative parts of the soul. The last two parts are irrational.

[11] Ibid., 109.

stratification in divine being. By emphasizing God's direct involvement in creation, Posidonius implicitly rules out the Demiurge, which most Platonists subscribe to. *Nous* is thus a tangible reality in Posidonius's scheme. But he acknowledges the sublimity of the *nous* by giving it the highest place in divine being: the heavens. In Posidonius's design, *nous* is superfluous in showing the transcendent One's connection to humans, because God's being is in everything. Albeit Posidonius's *nous* differs from that of other Middle Platonists, he retains the idea of the transcendent One's indwelling in the universe.

Plutarch partly subscribes to the Platonic tripartite structure of the human body: *nous*, soul, and body. But in his description of the human body, he posits a bipartite pairing: *nous* and soul (rational part), and soul and body (irrational part). The first pair is responsible for moral decisions and is thus the domain of virtue and vice; the second pair is the sensory domain and thus features the experience of pleasure and pain.[12] *Nous* is the quality that makes people morally accountable. For Plutarch, the soul is permeated with the *nous*; but it is not always rational since some of its parts are immersed into the body. The soul is a continuum whose rationality is dependent on the involvement of its segments: if they are submerged in bodily affairs they are irrational; if they are concerned about transcendent things they are moral. Plutarch makes little or no effort to give the *nous* an ethereal existence, or to link it to the divine *nous*.

Albinus resuscitates the Aristotelian idea of the Unmoved Mover. He argues that there are two types of *nous*: the unmoved *nous* and the *nous* in action. The "Primal God," as he calls the divine being, is pure *nous*. The divine being is not in potentiality to anything but causes all things. The human *nous* is set into motion by the divine being who is *nous* par excellence.[13] Albinus's explanation dismisses the mediatory role of the Demiurge. His theory implies God's

[12] Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 212.
[13] Ibid., 283.

direct role in the creation of the universe. It also means that the universe is created by unalloyed *nous* (God). For Albinus, God sets the universe in motion by ordering two Demiurges: the heavenly Mind and the Soul of the World. The former orders the celestial bodies (heavens), while the latter establishes the rest of the world (natural realm). Creation, as Dillion notes, is the process of being filled with divine being. It is also the turning of all creatures to God.[14] Albinus thus implies that all creatures partake of the divine *nous* through the reception of divine being and the never-ceasing retrospection of God. From this concise assessment of Middle Platonism, the following can be deduced: first, *nous* originates from God; second, *nous* is a divine substance that binds the creator to the universe; third, *nous* represents that which is most noble in the human beings; fourth, through *nous* the creator dwells in the universe; and lastly, both direct and indirect creation theories have a common denominator: through *nous* God orders the universe in accordance with the divine plan.

Nous in the Works of Philo

Philo's idea of the *nous* is reminiscent of that of the Greek philosophers, especially Platonism. He claims that the *nous* is the highest part of the human soul. The three parts of the soul, for Philo, as well as the Greek philosophers, are the seat of reason (head), the seat of courage (chest), and the seat of appetite (the guts).[15] He argues that in a healthy body, the rational part orders the activities of the irrational parts: the seat of courage and the seat of appetite. Conversely, if the human soul is at war within itself, reason is subjected to the dictates of the passions or irrational parts.[16] The relationship between the rational part of the soul and the irrational part can be likened to that of a king and his guards. When things are rightly

[14] Ibid., 283-284.

[15] Philo, "Allegorical Interpretation," III, in *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. by C. D. Yonge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 115.

[16] Philo, "Allegorical Interpretation," III, 117.

ordered, the guards receive orders from the king; but if the guards are involved in mutiny, royal order disintegrates, and the king might even be prisoned by his guards. This analogy, Philo claims, holds true for the human soul. Being virtuous, like the chain of command in the military, consists in the irrational parts of the soul submitting to the dictates of the rational part, while being vicious delineates a situation where the appetitive parts call the shots. At the heart of the rational part is the *nous* (the mind). *Nous* distinguishes humans from lower animals, which are dominated by their irrational parts.

Although some of the Greek philosophers locate the mind in the human head, Philo claims that the mind resides wherever it is needed. Since it is responsible for right judgment in the appetitive parts, it can be found in those parts where right judgments are taken and passions are controlled.[17] By refusing to localize the mind, Philo implies that it is immaterial; albeit, its function in the human soul can be seen clearly in a virtuous or vicious act. He writes: "But it [the mind] is not a substance … [it] must be pronounced incorporeal."[18] He also says that the mind is incomprehensible, and that all attempts to determine its true nature and structure are futile. Elsewhere in his writings, Philo identifies the *nous* as the rational part of humans. There is no clear distinction between the rational part of humans and the mind. Philo uses both concepts interchangeably. So I think it is safe to assume that they mean one and the same thing for Philo. He also does not make any distinction between the mind and the spirit—the latter seems not to be his concern or relevant to his treatise.

Besides Philo's philosophical reading of the *nous*, he posits a spiritual understanding of it. Basing his argument on the First Creation story in Genesis, he says that the *nous* is identical with the *imago Dei*. Philo argues that *nous* is alluded to when the sacred text speaks of humanity being created in the image and likeness of God. He opines that the *imago Dei*

[17] Philo, "Allegorical Interpretation," III, a. 116.

[18] Philo, "On Dreams," in *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. by C. D. Yonge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 30.

makes humans distinct from other creatures, and participators in God's role in ordering the universe. He writes: "But the resemblance (*imago Dei*) is spoken of with reference to the most important part of the soul, namely, the mind (*nous*)."[19] The mind, which is the highest faculty in the human soul, is created in the image of God so as to connect human corporeality to the divine. *Nous* is also the *imago Dei* because it actively shares in God's governance of the universe by its ordering of the bodily passions and senses. Regarding this, Philo states: "For the mind which exists in each individual has been created after the likeness of that one mind, which is in the universe as its primitive model, being in some sort the God of that body which carries it about and bears its image within it."[20] This quote is obviously reminiscent of the emanation theory in Hellenistic philosophy.

Further, commenting on the Second Creation account, Philo claims that the *ruah* God blew into Adam was *nous*.[21] This breath (that is, *nous*) became the life-giving principle in the human being. Philo refers to this as the "fragment of the Deity." It reminds the individual that he or she is bound to God. Philo also states that the mind in humans is holy. He likens the mind's role to the body to that of heaven and earth. He says that just as the heavens can praise the Creator, so too can the human mind. He argues that this uniqueness between the heavens and the mind make both holy. He adds: "For these two things, the heaven[s] and the mind, are the things which are able to utter, with all becoming dignity, the praises, and hymns, and glory, and beatitude of the Father who created them."[22] The mind is not special because it sings the praises of God; rather, it sings the praises of God because it is special. Philo holds that there is an intrinsic feature of the human mind, which accords it a special relationship with the divine. This feature is extensively described when Philo comments on Lev 3:12. Although the text

[19] Philo, "On the Creation," in *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. by C. D. Yonge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 69.

[20] Philo, "On the Creation," 69.

[21] Philo, "On Dreams," 34.

[22] Philo, "On Dreams," 35.

here refers to the election of the Levites for the priestly ministry over the other children of Israel, Philo presumes that it points to God's elevation of the mind above every other faculty.[23] This quote raises some interesting phrases: "God's suppliant" and "God's share."[24] The mind mediates between humans and the divine—God's suppliant; it is also humanity's way of participating in the divine—God's share; and the divine abiding in humanity. This reading of the Torah is inspired by a philosophical interpretative framework.

Nous in Josephus

Josephus uses *nous* in three senses: thought, mindset, and discernment. He departs from the philosophical idea of *nous* as something ethereal that makes the One present in humans. The other striking feature of *nous* in Josephus's works is the preponderant phrase *kata noun* (according to one's mind). *Kata noun* indicates the dominant idea of *nous* in Josephus's writings: thought. This term suggests thought and occurs in most instances where *nous* designates "one's mind." But in some cases, it means one's wish or mindset. I shall now discuss some of the relevant passages in Josephus's writings beginning with the instances referring to the human mind. *Antiquities of the Jews* 1:245 features the first of the *kata noun* phrases. It denotes Abraham's wish for his son's marriage. The text reads: "…Her [Rebecca] whom Abraham sent him, as his servant, to espouse to his son, in case his will (*kata noun*) were that this marriage … be consummated…." *Nous* here refers to Abraham's wish or his "thought" for the marriage. It is his intention (or will) for the marriage between Rebecca and Isaac. In Ant 4:111, Josephus says: "…He [Balaam] should declare nothing but what he himself [Balaam]

[23] Philo writes: "Reason which fled to God and became his suppliant, is what is here called the Levite; God having taken this from the most central and dominant part of the soul … and appropriated it as his own share, thought it worthy of the honor due to the first-born." Philo, "The Sacrifices of Abel and Cain," in *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. by C. D. Yonge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 119.

[24] Ibid.

should suggest to his mind (*kata noun*)." *Nous* here refers to Balaam's decision or thinking. The sentence can easily be rephrased to read: Balaam should say what he thinks. Josephus continues with this usage in Ant 4:267: "…When the Jewish affairs shall, by the blessing of God, be to their [the borrowers'] own mind (*kata noun*)." The context for this quote is the prohibition of usury among Hebrew people, who are urged to receive the same value for items lent without interest. *Nous* thus signifies the intention, wish, or decision of the borrowers mentioned. It is the same as the borrowers' "thoughts."

In Ant 6:287, Josephus recounts David's plight for mercy from King Saul. David appeals to Saul not to listen to the awful things said about him. David also begs Saul to judge him by his character and not by people's words. *Nous* appears in a portion of this conversion: "…And not to believe those who frame such accusations against me [David] as never came into my mind (*eis noun*)." A paraphrase of this quote is: do not frame me (David) for what I never thought of. *Nous* here refers to thinking. In Ant 7:92, Josephus tells his version of the David-Nathan story on the building of the temple. In Josephus's account, God turns down the request of David because he had been defiled by the slaughter of his enemies. *Nous* is used in speaking about the temple. The text reads: "…Since no one had before now taken it into their (sic) head (*eis noun balomenou*) to build him [God] a temple…." The Greek phrase states: "thrown into the mind." It means "conceived of" building the temple. The sense of *nous* here is thought. It can easily be rephrased to say: no one prior to this moment has ever thought of building a temple.

Josephus retains the idea of thought in Ant 7:186. The larger context of Josephus's use of *nous* here is Joab's intervention in David's anger over Absalom. Joab bribed an elderly woman to approach David and to request him to pardon Absalom. When David realized that the woman's story was the invention of Joab, he asked Joab to fetch Absalom. David told Joab that he had forgiven Absalom. The text reads: "…He [David] called for Joab, and told him he

had obtained what he requested, according to his own mind (*kata noun*)." *Kata noun* thus implies David's discovery of the truth, "according to his own mind" (that is, he realized that Joab fabricated the story to awaken his conscience). In Ant 11:335, Josephus recounts Alexander the Great's dream of conquering Darius, the Persian Emperor, and extending the frontiers of Greek hegemony to Asia. The text reads: "…All things [plans to defeat Darius] will succeed according to what is in my [Alexander's] own mind (*kata noun*)." *Kata noun* in this instance is convertible with Alexander's thoughts or plans to conquer Persia.

In Ant 12:55, Eleazer, the Jewish high priest, writes King Ptolemy to reassure him of their unwavering support and the good will of the Jewish people. As a gesture of loyalty or fealty, Eleazar says: "We offered sacrifices for you … that your [King Ptolemy's] affairs may be to your mind (*kata noun*)…." *Kata noun* here refers to the intentions, thoughts, or desires of King Ptolemy for his kingdom. An identical usage of *nous* is found in Ant 13:163. The context for this quote is the victory of Jonathan's army over its enemies. Josephus reports that two thousand soldiers (from the enemy's camp) were slain at the battle. After the resounding victory and Jonathan's return to Jerusalem, he plans a trip to Rome in other to solidify Roman-Jewish ties. The text says: "When he [Jonathan] saw that all had prospered according to his mind (*kata noun*) … he sent ambassadors to the Romans…." *Nous* here is comparable to Jonathan's thought, wish or plan. In Ant 14:278, Josephus narrates the reconciliation between Malichus and Antiphater. He says that Malichus, being a man of great cunning, deceived Antiphater into empathizing with him and pardoning him. The text reads: "…and [Malichus] said, that while Phasaelus had a garrison in Jerusalem, and Herod had the weapons of war in his custody, he [Malichus] could never have a thought (*nous*) of any such thing." *Nous* is correctly translated as thought, because it refers to the content of Malichus's thinking. In Ant 14:454, Josephus writes about a king who besieged Jericho to avenge the death of his brother: "Then did the king march hastily to Jericho, intending (*kata noun*) to avenge himself on the

enemy for the slaughter of his brother…." To determine the sense of *nous* here, I will look at the Greek briefly. It reads: *timoresasthai* (to punish by himself) *kata noun echon* (having according to his mind) *autous* (them). A possible paraphrase reads: the king thought of punishing them (his brother's murderers) personally. Thus *nous* implies a thought or a plan.

In Ant 16:194, Josephus recounts Pheroras's flirtation with a slave girl and his disdain for his fiancée, the princess: "…He [Pheroras] despised the king's daughter, to whom he had been betrothed, and wholly bent his mind (*nous*) to the other, who had been but a servant." This means that Pheroras thought of and desired the female slave. *Nous* here alludes to Pheroras's thought: his interest in the female slave. Josephus uses *nous* in a similar way when he describes Sylleus's infatuation for Salome: "…Sylleus … saw Salome and set his heart (*noun*) upon her…." Albeit the text says "heart" because the context favors an emotionally appropriate word, the same meaning can be expressed differently: Sylleus saw Salome and thought only of her. *Nous* in this quote refers to Sylleus's feelings for or thoughts of Salome. In Ant 20:76, Josephus says that when Monobazus and his kindred saw that people admired Izates for his piety, they chose to abandon their country and to embrace the customs of the Jews. Izates's subjects probably leaked this information, and it stirred the fury of the high nobles: "But [the high nobles] had an intention (*kata noun*), when they should find a proper opportunity, to inflict a punishment upon them [Monobazus and his kindred]." *Kata noun* signifies the "thoughts" of the high nobles. *Nous* again means thought.

In the *Life of Flavius Josephus* 1:122, Josephus says that John disliked him, because of his successes. Josephus enumerates the following successes: admiration from subordinates and the enemy's dread of him. He writes: "…John … was informed how all things had succeeded to my [Flavius Josephus] mind (*kata noun*)…." *Kata noun* alludes to Josephus's thoughts. It encompasses his aspirations. In *Against Apion* 2:142, Josephus accuses Apion of being "blind in mind," because he reproached his own people (the Jews) and their customs on account of

the Egyptians. The text reads: "Apion was therefore quite blinded in his mind (*noun*)…." *Nous* here refers to Apion's thinking or decisions. In Ant 8:23, Josephus, while retelling the story of Solomon's prayer after his enthronement, nuances his understanding of *nous*: "'Give me, O Lord, a healthy mind (*noun hugie*) and good understanding.'" A "healthy mind" empowers the king to make sound judgments. It also enables the king to discern issues thoughtfully. *Nous* in this phrase denotes rationality or discernment. It is more profound than thought, and is certainly not mindset. But this "healthy mind" is a discernment that originates from careful thinking.

Josephus also uses *nous* in an equivocal way: to mean wish or thought. *Antiquities of the Jews* 13:166 features the letter of Jonathan, the high priest of the Jews, to the Roman senate. In this letter, Jonathan wishes Rome well: "If you be well, and both your public and private affairs be agreeable to your mind (*kata noun*), it is according to our wishes. We are also well." *Kata noun* refers to the state's aspirations: peace, prosperity, and victory. So *nous* means a pleasant wish. In *Jewish Wars* 4:622, Josephus says that Vespasian's good fortunes helped him to realize his wishes: "So Vespasian's good fortunes succeeded to (sic) his wishes (*kata noun*) everywhere…." In this sentence, *nous* indicates Vespasian's aspirations and desires. It also means "thought." There is an identical usage in *Jewish Wars* 7:119. Here Josephus narrates Titus's voyage into Egypt and his satisfaction with its completion: "So when he had a prosperous voyage to his mind (*kata noun*)…." This means that the voyage met Vespasian's expectations and desires (and thoughts).

Josephus uses *nous* as mindset. In Ant 1:20, Josephus emphasizes contemplation for a legislator who wishes to be virtuous: "Neither could the legislator himself have a right mind (*noun agathon*) without such a contemplation…." *Nous* denotes mindset—the legislator's way of thinking. In Ant 5:319, Josephus maintains the idea of *nous* as mindset. The context for this passage is the story of Elimelech and Naomi. It recounts how Elimelech took his wife Naomi and two sons to Moab, when the famine in Israel became unbearable. While Elimelech was in

Moab, he got wives for his two sons. The text reads: "…And upon the happy prosperity of his [Elimelech's] affairs (*kata noun*) there, he took for his sons, wives of the Moabites…." *Kata noun ton pragmaton* (according to his work) is the phrase translated as "his affairs." But the idea Josephus is trying to communicate is that Elimelech got wives for his two sons when his economic situation improved. *Kata noun* does not mean "thought," but is better rendered mindset (his perception of the economic situation). Thus *nous* in Josephus primarily means thought. In special contexts, it could mean mindset or discernment.

Nous in Neoplatonism

The source of all being, for Plotinus, is the One, which subsists in every being, yet must not be identified with anything. The One is transcendent, motionless, and perfect. It is the fount of all being and intellection. It is present in all things in a transcendental sense—it has the archetype of all beings, or their ideal forms.[25] In its fullest self-communication, the One communicates itself to the divine mind (*nous*), which becomes the intellectual-principle for every created thing in the universe. The divine mind is the perfect representation of the One, and is generated through a motionless process of self-intellection by the One. It is distinct from the One not in being, but in the logical process of emanation and causation of being. The divine mind, characterized by the intellectual-principle, generates the soul. The soul, unlike the divine mind, is prone to motion. In its act of self-intellection, it generates sense and nature, the vegetal principle.[26] This downward flow of being, for Plotinus, is the theory of emanation.

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[25] Plotinus, "The Origin and Order of the 'Beings Following on the First,'" *The Fifth Ennead*, in *The Enneads: A New Definitive Edition with Comparisons to Other Translations on Hundreds of Key Passages*, trans. by Stephen MacKenna (Burdett: Paul Brunton Philosophic Foundation, 1992), 1.

[26] Plotinus believes that being is diminished when it goes downward (emanation). As such, the world of nature (animals and plants) is considered lesser in being than humans. The vegetal principle refers to the last stage of emanation, according to Plotinus's theory.

Although emanation follows a downward movement, Plotinus believes that an upward movement preserves the being of all generated things: the contemplation of the source of their being. This upward movement is regarded as the theory of "perfection." The divine mind, which proceeds from the One, participates in this cosmic perfection when it gazes on the One, in order to retain the latter's form. The soul, in its quest for perfection, looks up to the divine mind, as its origin and exemplar. By so doing, the order of things in the universe is maintained and all generated beings are in harmony with each other. This emanation and "retrospection" of various levels of beings safeguard the bond of unity in the cosmos. Confirming this, Plotinus writes: "For its [the soul's] perfecting, it must look to that Divine Mind, which may be thought of as a father watching over the development of his child born imperfect in comparison with himself."[27] Perfection, in this context, does not imply moral rectitude, but the striving toward the goal of the being's generation. The unity in the universe is concretely achieved by the succeeding being's retrospection of the preceding being. In its intellection, the soul acquaints itself with its imperfection, which means its depreciation in being, in comparison with its source. According to this theory of perfection, the human mind can only be made perfect when it gazes on the divine mind, its source and exemplar. The human mind's contemplation of the divine mind is the core of its perfection. Plotinus also stresses the interrelationship between the divine mind and the human mind. He says that the interrelationship between these two minds is enhanced by two principles: (1) a recognition by the human mind of the preeminence of the divine mind; and (2) the affirmation of the immanence of the divine mind in the human soul. He says: "In two ways … the Intellectual-Principle [used interchangeably with the Divine Mind] enhances the divine quality of the Soul, as father and as immanent presence; nothing separates them but the fact that they are not one and the same, [and] that there is

[27] Plotinus, "The Three Initial Hypostases," *The Fifth Ennead*, 3.

succession…."[28] Plotinus divinizes human reason and perceives it to be humanity's gateway to divine life and its remote link to the One. Also, he states that the human mind is the divine element in the human person. This means that the human mind, being an integral part of cosmic emanation, is immortal and ethereal.

Regarding the first, Plotinus argues that the human mind, like its soul, proceeds from the divine mind; it owes its existence to the latter. The human mind is the divine image in the world. It mirrors the divine mind in its fullest grandeur. Plotinus reiterates this: "Reason uttered is an image of the reason stored…." [29] The human mind's "perfection" consists in contemplating the divine mind. Another angle to this claim of Plotinus is that the human mind is the link between the divine realm of perfect forms and ideas, and the world of sense and nature. Second, Plotinus claims that the divine mind actively participates in the human mind. This means that the human mind can discern the divine mind, because the latter subsists in the former. Distinctive functions or processes of the human mind, like rationality, are hence considered to be the remote handiwork of the divine mind. The human mind is not just an imperfect copy of the divine mind or an imitation of it, but is its inhabitation in the created universe. From what we have seen so far, Plotinus' doctrine of *nous* can succinctly be stated: (1) the divine *nous* proceeds from the One, which is present in everything in the universe; (2) this same divine *nous* envelops the perfect copies of everything in the world and is their origin; (3) the human *nous* emanates from the divine *nous*, although it is an imperfect copy of the latter; (4) the divine *nous* inhabits the human *nous*; and (5) the human *nous* is made perfect through contemplation, or "retrospection" of the divine *nous*.

Summary

[28] Plotinus, "The Three Initial Hypostases," 3.
[29] Plotinus, "The Three Initial Hypostases," 3.

In this chapter, we examined the use of *nous* in the socio-religious context of Paul: the Hebrew Scriptures—the proto-canonical and the deuterocanonical books, Middle Platonism, Philo's works, Josephus's writings, and Neoplatonism. In the proto-canonical books of the Bible, the LXX translates *lev* as *nous* in contexts where the Hebrew word for heart had at least one of these three nuances: first, whenever it refers to a rational process like thought, understanding, or planning; second, whenever heart is used figuratively; and third, whenever the operative verb in the sentence implies thought. All the instances considered in this chapter had at least one of these three categories. Also, it should be noted that the only verse the LXX renders as *nous* that does not use *lev* in the Hebrew, Isa 40:13, is the one Paul cites for *nous*. The LXX, mindful of rational connotation of *nous*, translates the Hebrew *ruah* as *nous*. The deuterocanonical books were studied separately, because they are a collection of texts of Greek origin. In these books, *nous* refers to a person's disposition, thinking, or worldview, and, in 4 Maccabees, to the human mind in a philosophical sense. *Nous* in these writings is remarkably nuanced to emphasize the preeminence of rationality over the bodily senses. Also, at this stage, *nous* had been purged of any idea of corporeality. It evinces an apparent dissociation from the Hebrew idea of a "physical organ." It is used in an immaterial sense. Fourth Maccabees' idea of *nous* leads logically to the Hellenistic discussion on the subject.

In Middle Platonism, *nous* primarily refers to the Demiurge. This mystical being is the "middle man" in creation. The Demiurge bridges the gap between the One and creatures. It secures the One's presence in creation. Middle Platonists differ in their explication of this principle. Philo endorses the Middle Platonists' idea of the *nous*. But his reading is allegorical. Philo claims that the human *nous* is the breath of life bestowed by the Creator. Appealing to the Second Account of creation, he says that the "breath of life," which animated the motionless human body, is *nous*. This gift, for Philo, becomes God's way of preserving and sustaining humanity. Philo also, regarding the First Account of creation, says that *nous* refers to the *imago*

Dei. Here, he says that the *nous* is that noble feature which singles out the human person from all other creatures. Being God's image, for Philo, makes it possible for humans to praise and worship God. This office of praising the Creator is likewise shared by the heavens. The last bold claim that Philo makes is that *nous* is God's place in the human soul—it is the means through which the divine indwells humans. Philo picked up this insight from his allegorical reading of the priestly election of the Levites. He says that just as the Levites were chosen from the children of Israel, God has chosen the human *nous* as the divine portion from all the other faculties in the human person, and, by extension, over all other creatures.

Josephus uses *nous* mainly as human thought. This idea is consistent throughout his writings, except for his account on Solomon's election by God. In this narrative, Josephus employs *nous* as discernment. The other nuance Josephus gives the *nous* is mindset. Albeit there are three variants for nous in Josephus, one can argue for a unity in them all: thought. Discernment is thinking profoundly, while mindset is thinking in a certain way. The divine *nous* in Neoplatonism is the principle of generation for all created things in the universe. It contains the archetypal form of everything in the world, and is the first self-emanation, or explication of the transcendent One. By holding the perfect forms of all things, it becomes the primary yardstick for determining what is perfect (like its forms) and what is not (unlike its forms). The first self-communication of the divine *nous* begets the soul, the place wherein the human *nous* resides. The human *nous* is the link between divine *nous*, and, by extension, the One, and the vegetative order: the world of sense and nature. The outpouring of being down the ladder, and the retrospection of being up the ladder sustain the unity in the universe, for Plotinus. The upward movement is referred to as perfection, or quasi-retrospection, while the movement is called emanation.

CHAPTER TWO

NOUS IN PAUL'S LETTERS AND IN THE NT

For some time, scholars have been divided on how to interpret Paul's assertion: "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). Some have argued that the phrase *nous Christou* refers to a Christ-like mindset, while others say it alludes to the transforming work of the Spirit.[30] Divergence in the interpretation of the text has also resulted from the imposition of different anthropological and philosophical frameworks on Paul, whether Jewish ones (e.g., using Josephus or Philo), or Greek ones (e.g., Middle Platonism or Neoplatonism). The emphasis was hardly on the LXX's probable influence on Paul or his literary ingenuity.[31] In this chapter, I will argue that Paul's terminology was primarily influenced by the LXX's concept of *nous*, but in 1 Cor 2:16, Paul ingeniously conflates his LXX heritage (the term) with the pervading Greek philosophy (the Spirit's action in the *ekklēsia*). So I will investigate all the appearances of *nous* in the NT, beginning with the Pauline corpus. The undisputed letters will be treated first, and then the disputed letters. Next, I will analyze the appearances of the term in Luke and Revelation. As we have already seen, Paul employs *nous* in two senses: mindset and human

[30] Those who argue that *nous Christou* refers to God's Spirit include: Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. by James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 69; Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters*, 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 290; and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible 32 (New Haven: Yale University, 2008), 185-186. Those who claim that *nous Christou* means mindset include: Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 128; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 275-276; Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, edited by D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 138; Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians* Sacra Pagina 7, edited by Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999), 138. However, all those who argue for mindset believe it is a "mode of thought" that is enabled or inspired by the Spirit of Christ.

[31] Some scholars argue for the influence of Greek philosophy on Paul's *nous*. Among these scholars, few make it very explicit: Pheme Perkins, *First Corinthians* Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 62; Emma Wasserman, "Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide? The Case of Pauline Anthropology in Romans 7 and 2 Corinthians 4-5," in *Christian Origins and Hellenistic Judaism: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts (Boston: Leiden, 2013), 259.

understanding. This trend continues in the disputed letters (mindset) and in Luke and Revelation (human understanding empowered by divine inspiration). Paul's usage is thus in line with all other uses of the term in the NT. The exceptions to this pattern is 1 Cor 2:16 (mindset) and Rom 7 (understanding). In 1 Cor 2:16, the *nous Christou* denotes a Christ-like mindset that is inspired, enlivened, and sustained in the *ekklēsia* by God's Spirit. In Rom 7, *nous* refers to the rationality of the Adamic person. But these exceptions are comparable to the established pattern: mindset and reasoning. Their peculiarity consists in Paul's literary ingenuity and creative rhetorical adaptation of the term to imbue it with a fresh impetus.

Regarding the *nous Christou*, I will also argue that the phrase refers to a mystical way of making Christ concretely present through the action of a Spirit-inspired mindset. This idea is informed by Paul's directive in 1 Cor 5:3. The text reads: "For though absent in body, I am present in spirit…." Paul believes he is present in the *ekklēsia* through his spirit. Likewise, the Spirit does not only inspire a Christ-like mindset, but it makes Christ concretely present in the *ekklēsia*, when people convene in the "name of the Lord."[32] This "spiritual" presence is only applicable to the *ekklēsia*. Paul's emphasis too shows that his spirit is his way of being in solidarity with the *ekklēsia*. The *nous Christou* too is conferred by the Spirit to make Christ present in the *ekklēsia*. Possession of the *nous Christou*, like the *nous* of Greek philosophy, is a sort of ontological character of the *ekklēsia* (deeply ingrained in its being) that marks it as Christ's body. This association will be explored later. The Spirit is also the architect and

[32] Paul speaks of his spirit being present when the community is gathered. The phrase reads: *sunachthentōn humin kai tou emou pneumatos* (summoning you and my spirit). Paul firmly believes he is concretely present in the assembly through his spirit. The context is Paul's condemnation of a man who was having sexual relations with his father's wife. Paul's emphasis here is simple: when the community is assembled in the power of Christ Jesus, they will be acting in accordance with his "mindset": doing what he would have done if he were present. This image (allusion to Paul's spirit) is most likely implied when he speaks of the *nous Christou*, such that the possession of a Spirit-inspired mindset is not merely having Christ's way of thinking, but is the *ekklēsia*'s identity that makes Christ visibly present.

enforcer of communal *Christification*.[33] This mindset, fashioned and inculcated by the Spirit, engenders the *ekklēsia*'s conformity to the *imago Christou* and makes it Christ's body.[34]

Nous as "Mindset" in the Undisputed Letters

After the customary greeting in 1 Cor 1:1-9, Paul addresses the issue of division. He exhorts the Corinthians: "I appeal to you … that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind (*nous*) and the same purpose" (1 Cor 1:10). This appeal is an antidote to the antidote to the existing faction. Five phrases are remarkable in this admonition: "be in agreement," "no divisions among you," "be united," "same mind," and "same purpose." These parallel phrases drive home a single point: the pith of ecclesial unity is Christ, and no one else. Paul rhetorically underscores this stance: "What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul,' or 'I belong to Apollos,' or 'I belong to Cephas,' or 'I belong to Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul" (1 Cor 1:12-13)? This means that the "same mind" must be antithetical to the division described by Paul, but identical to the exhortation to be united, in agreement and of the same purpose. I will now examine each of these phrases to see how they illumine our understanding of the "same mind" in this context.

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[33] Paul argues that no one understands what is truly divine except God's Spirit. The Spirit is the one who interprets the gifts bestowed on the community by God (1 Cor 2:11-12). Paul also holds that the Spirit necessitates the radical transformation of the community from a vicious lifestyle to a saintly (Paul uses this word in a basic sense: the holy ones) calling. The community is washed, sanctified and justified by the Spirit, in the name of Jesus: the community is modelled after Christ (1 Cor 6:11). The Spirit also molds the baptized into one body: the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). Becoming one body in Christ is the end-point of having the same mindset: *nous Christou*. This is the meaning of *Christification*.

[34] Cruciform (literal meaning "cross-shaped") refers to the characteristic feature of Paul's gospel, which emphasizes the crucifixion of Christ and is the spectacle through which he views reality: "… We proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24). *Imago Christou* means the image and likeness of Christ crucified.

The phrase translated as "be in agreement" (*hina to auto legēte pantes*) is literally, "that all may speak the same thing." This appeal is directed at those propagating divisive views and threatening the ecclesial unity. "Be in agreement" is the positive parallel for "let there be no division among you" (*mē en humin schismata*). Paul uses the subjunctive verb in both instances to show that this unity is a *desiradatum*. But it also implies that this unity is apparently absent. The second pair of phrases "same mind" and "same purpose," reiterates the need for ecclesial unity. Paul firmly believes that the *ekklēsia* is Christ's body (1 Cor 12:27). Since in Christ there is no division (1 Cor 1:13), the *ekklēsia* must expunge all factions. The second phrase extolling unity contains a notable verb *katartizō*, which means to "restore (to a prior condition) or to set aright." It reads: *hēte de katērtismenoi en tōi autōi noi kai en tē autēi gnōmē* ("but be restored in the same mind and in the same purpose"—au. trans.). Paul's use of the subjunctive presupposes that the *ekklēsia*'s unity is being threatened by some people's unwillingness to "speak as one" and to "think as one." Paul's admonition to the *ekklēsia* to restore its "same mind" and "same purpose" alludes to the integral unity of the community as the visible body of Christ.

Raymond F. Collins observes that *schismata* is imbued with political connotation. He writes: "In political rhetoric *schisma* was figuratively used of a division of opinion or a cleft in political consciousness…."[35] *Schisma* is akin to *katartizō* which delineates the "calming of political unrest, the appeasement of factions, and the restoration of political unity."[36] Paul thus uses well-known political imagery to denigrate the existing divisions in the *ekklēsia*, and to liken the church at Corinth to the secular groups. Paul is stretching the church's division by likening it to political parties; or rather, he is underscoring the Christ-believers at Corinth's departure from the path set out for them: the way of the mind of Christ.

[35] Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians* Sacra Pagina 7, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999), 77.

[36] Ibid.

Another way of looking at Paul's exhortation is to consider the first phrases ("be in agreement" and "same mind") to be the fulfillment of the second phrases ("no division among you" and "same purpose"). To forestall the division in the *ekklēsia*, the people need to "speak as one," while in order to have a common purpose, they need to "think as one." The verb *katartizō*, besides denoting "restoration," also means to "make complete." So the phrase could also be read as "be perfect in the same mind and purpose." This means that an excellent paraphrase for Paul's argument is: if you agree with each other, there will be no division among you; and if you have the same mind, you can strive toward the same purpose. Either way, *nous* denotes a mindset—a way of thinking that makes having and striving toward a common purpose possible, and rids the *ekklēsia* of all forms of divisions.

Michael J. Gorman notes that the language in 1 Cor 1:10 reechoes Paul's language in 1 Cor 2:16 and Phil 2:6-11. He claims that the connection between these three passages is the *nous Christou*—a Christ-like mindset.[37] As in Phil 2:6-11, Gorman argues that Paul's condemnation of the rivalry sects at Corinth is based on his conviction in the crucified Lord and his self-emptying for humanity's salvation. In this self-emptying, God's power and the gospel of Jesus Christ shine through human frailty and brings about the conversion of people from every race. As Gorman rightly observes, Paul's argument is rhetorically marshalled out: the success of the good news must never be attributed to preachers or their "showy rhetoric," but to the power of the cross.[38] The *nous Christou* disapproves of self-aggrandizement and promotes a neutral ground for church unity: life in Christ. Gorman insinuates that *nous* here means mindset. His explanation makes this obvious. Albeit I agree with Gorman's reasoning, I will argue later that *nous Christou* entails more than what Gorman describes: it is an intrinsic quality of the *ekklēsia*.

[37] Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 286.

[38] Ibid., 287.

In Rom 1:28, Paul uses *nous* as a way of thinking. The text reads: "And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind (*nous*) and to things that should not be done." The "debased mind" which the ungodly and the wicked were given up to leads to a vicious and immoral lifestyle, which is explained in the preceding verse and is echoed in the subsequent ones. The verb "give up" (*paradōken*) occurs two other times in the immediately preceding verses (Rom 1:24, 26), each time with some immoral object: the lusts of their hearts to impurity, the degrading of their bodies, and their degrading passions. These immoral acts describe the perverted mindset of the wicked. It is a mindset that refuses to honor or give thanks to God (Rom 1:21); a way of life that substitutes the "glory of God" for idols (Rom 1:23); a worldview that leads to the loss of the human integrity enshrined in the *imago Dei* (Rom 1:26-27). *Nous* here means the "disposition" that makes these licentious acts possible. Frank J. Matera calls this disposition the "undiscerning mind," which is unable and unwilling to distinguish between what is acceptable and what is not, what praises the Creator and what is self-serving.[39] This "undiscerning mind" is clearly a mindset.

In Rom 12:2, Paul tells "the brothers and the sisters" to present their bodies to God as a "living sacrifice," which is holy and acceptable. This living sacrifice, Paul insists, is a "thoughtful (meaningful; *logikē*) worship" that is pleasing to God. It is achieved through the renewal of the mind and the refusal to be conformed to "this age." This verse introduces the "ethical" segment of the Letter to the Romans. *Nous* signifies mindset. This becomes evident when we consider the word's relationship to two phrases in the sentence: "conformed to this age" and "discern what is God's will." The "renewal of the mind" is the antithesis of being conformed to the present age. Paul spells this out using the prohibitive *mē* before "being conformed to this age," and the adversative *alla* to introduce the "renewal of mind." Hence,

[39] Frank J. Matera, *Romans,* Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 53.

the only way to avoid being conformed to this age is through the renewal of one's mind, which brings about the discernment of God's will. The renewal of mind evokes the "debased mind" used in chapter one. Just as the "debased mind" led to dishonorable passions and the denigration of human integrity, the "renewal of the mind" now leads to the knowledge of and the performance of God's will. There are three fruits of the "renewed mind": good (beneficial to individuals), acceptable (builds up the *ekklēsia*), and perfect (aids individuals to attain life's goal). So the renewed mindset is the crucial link between Paul's "theological" treatise and his "ethical" exhortation. The mind designates a mindset that is debased or discerning. If the *ekklēsia*'s mindset is renewed, then Paul's ensuing exhortation becomes feasible: "I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned" (Rom 12:3).

Nous as Human Understanding in the Undisputed Letters

In Phil 4:7, Paul uses *nous* as understanding. It reads: "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding (*nous*), will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." *Panta noun* (singular) is the object of the active, feminine participle *hē huperechousa,* which, given Paul's "eucharistic" tone, alludes to God's overwhelming power that exceeds human comprehension.[40] *Nous* refers to rationality and to the human quest of making spiritual events intelligible. Paul encourages the Philippians not to despair or to be fixated on their present humiliation (Phil 3:21), but to thank God in all things: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I

[40] *Eucharisteō* is the Greek verb for thanksgiving. The tone in the concluding part of Paul's letter to the Philippians is that of thanksgiving. Ironically, Paul's stresses the theme of thanksgiving in this letter, amidst his imprisonment and suffering. The logic and source of Paul's gratitude is God's faithfulness which surpasses human comprehension. Paul's attitude is best captured by his exhortation: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice" (Phil 4:4).

say, rejoice" (Phil 4:4). The eucharistic disposition and the comportment of gentleness, for Paul, should characterize an *ekklēsia* awaiting the parousia (Phil 4:5). It is the hallmark of an assembly whose citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20). *Nous* is interchangeable with rationality or human understanding in this passage.

In 1 Cor 14:14-15, *nous* denotes human understanding. The context is an admonition on *glossōlalia* (speaking in tongues). Paul recognizes *glossōlalia* as the Spirit's gift to the *ekklēsia*; but he expresses concern about its usage. For Paul, those who have received this gift from the Spirit should exercise it bearing one goal in mind: the building up of the *ekklēsia* (1 Cor 14:5b, 12). Since every gift of the Spirit is intended for the building up of the *ekklēsia*, *glossōlalia*'s merit is dependent on its fruitfulness in the community. Thus Paul says: "If in a tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is being said? For you will be speaking into the air" (1 Cor 14:9). Now, since the Spirit's gift of interpretation is integral to speaking in tongues in the *ekklēsia*, Paul's exhortation for the gift of interpretation to be exercised when *glossōlalia* takes place is a question of intelligibility and the building up of the *ekklēsia*. Hence, in 1 Cor 14:14-15, *nous* is equivalent to rationality (illumined by the gift of interpretation), while spirit refers to the part of the human person that receives the life of grace. *Nous* is applied here in a neutral sense.

Paul does not employ *nous* as the antithesis of the *pneuma*, as some argue, but as the human faculty that should be enlightened by the Spirit's gift of interpretation. Paul does not demean *nous*; rather, he extols it as the "bridge builder" in the *ekklēsia*. Paul's exhortation is firmly rooted in the conviction: the gifts of the Spirit are intended for the building up of the *ekklēsia*. To reiterate this, Paul writes: "In [the] church, I would rather speak five words with my mind (*nous*)… to instruct others … than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Cor 14:19). So, albeit Paul does not prohibit *glossōlalia,* he urges the *ekklēsia* to consider ways of using this gift that will be most beneficial to the growth of the assembly. To achieve this goal, when

one speaks in tongues in the *ekklēsia*, there must be someone else endowed with the gift of interpretation to explain what is said. This organization fosters the ecclesial growth. So, even though *nous* and *pneuma* are distinct terms, they are not mutually exclusive: *nous* needs to be aided by the Spirit to be effective. Robert Jewett foregrounds my interpretation of *nous* as rationality. He says that the belief that the mind must make an exit before ecstasy begins was widespread in Greek mystery religions. He argues that Paul, contrary to the position of the enthusiasts who claimed that glossolalia was "completely uncontrollable," held that it could be effectively managed for the building up of the *ekklēsia*. As such, Jewett claims that when Paul uses *nous* against the enthusiasts, what he means is "the source of conscious self-control and of clear communication of ideas."[41] Jewett also defines *nous* as an "agent of rationality" that instills a "sense of sober self-control and simple communication" into the *ekklēsia*.[42] Jewett reads *nous* primarily as rationality, illumined by the Spirit's gift of interpretation.

In Rom 14:5, Paul uses *nous* too as human reason or understanding. Most likely, Paul was presented with the issue of observing festive days in the Jewish calendar and the practice of abstinence. While adjudicating this matter, Paul says: "Let all be fully convinced in their own minds (*nous*)" (Rom 14:5b). This means: let each one follow his or her own conviction, because this is not a matter of immense importance: divergent views on such matters do not affect the cruciform witness of the *ekklēsia*. But a lack of charity in respecting the opinions of others may affect the assembly's witness. *Nous* here functions as understanding or reasoning. *Nous* refers to each member's ability to think through the matter. It upholds people's rights to use their reasoning in assessing "grey areas." Paul respects divergence of opinions on this subject, because it is not a threat to his gospel.

[41] Robert Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 379.

[42] Ibid., 379.

In 2 Thess 2:2, Paul encourages the "brothers and sisters," regarding the parousia, not to be "quickly shaken in mind (*nous*) or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter…." Paul employs *saleuthēnai* metaphorically (to shake or tremble). *Saleuthēnai* usually describes the trembling of a building's foundations or the shaking of stationary objects. For instance, in Acts 4:31, Luke says: "When they had all prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken (*esaleuthē*)." The verb here means worry or anxiety ("shaken" in mind). What is "shaken" is people's thoughts. Paul addresses the anxiety that a false alarm about the parousia engenders. To allay people's anxiety, Paul insists that there will be signs heralding this event. *Nous* here means thought and is in line with the LXX's usage. I will now examine *nous* in Rom 7:23-25 which is a nuanced form of human understanding.

Nous in Rom 7:23-25

Although *nous* only occurs in the concluding verses of Rom 7, I will examine the wider context for its appearance before looking at Rom 7:23-25, which features the highly disputed *egō*. Scholars are divided on how best to interpret the *egō* and its literary context.[43] The use of different tenses—past (Rom 7:7-13) and present tenses (Rom 7:14-25)—suggests a temporal change in the subject: a past life and a present situation, thereby insinuating Paul's autobiography. But W. G. Kümmel debunked this stance in a landmark exegesis on this subject.[44] Kümmel's arguments are anchored on other "autobiographical" assertions of Paul, where he says, "as to righteousness under the law, blameless" (Phil 3:6) and "for I was far more

[43] In the first millennium of the text's interpretation, most exegetes (the Latin and Greek Fathers) seem to have favored an autobiographical reading of the text—i.e., Paul was narrating his personal life story. Later, there was a move to Paul's pre- and post-conversion experiences. But recently, scholars have moved away from such simplistic explanations, especially in the light of more insight into Greco-Roman rhetoric. Anthony C. Thiselton, *Discovering Romans: Content, Interpretation, Reception* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 157-158.

[44] Robert Jewett, *Romans*, edited by Eldon Jay Epp (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 441.

zealous for the traditions of my ancestors" (Gal 1:14). Scholars are now dissatisfied with an autobiographical explanation on this account. The idea of the *egō* portraying Paul's pre- and post-conversion experiences has also been jettisoned, for the same reason.

Instead of an autobiographical reading, current scholarship considers Rom 7:7-25 to be a classical instance of a Greco-Roman rhetorical device known as *prosōpopoeia*: a literary device where "the identity of the speaker is conveyed not by … [a] personal name but by the speaker's self-disclosure…." [45] Keck opines that this device is evidently at work in Rom 7. If this passage is read as a *prosōpopoeia*, *egō* would refer to humanity corporately, and not to Paul. Douglas J. Moo aptly captures this: "Nobody in particular and everybody in general."[46] He calls it the existential direction.[47] He lists four directions in interpretation: autobiography, Adam, Israel, and existential. He argues that the best reading of *egō* is the conflation of the autobiographical and Israel directions.[48] Moo sympathizes with both readings of the *egō*. He reinforces this claim: "We argue for a combination of the autobiographical view with the view that identifies *egō* with Israel. *Egō* is not Israel, but *egō* is Paul in solidarity with Israel."[49] Moo's reading does not satisfactorily address the concerns of Kümmel; it also does not reasonably demonstrate an awareness of the Greco-Roman *prosōpopoeia*.

Joseph A. Fitzmyer observes that there are five dominant interpretations for the *egō*: autobiography, psychology, Adam, Christian, and cosmic-historical.[50] These trends partly

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[45] Leander E. Keck, *Romans* Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 180.

[46] Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* NICNT, edited by Ned B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, and Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 426.

[47] Moo speaks of "directions" in interpretation, instead of interpretations.

[48] Moo says: "Paul is describing his own, and other Jews,' experience with the law of Moses: how that law came to the Jewish people and brought to them, not 'life,' but 'death' (vv. 7-12); and how that law failed, because of the reign of the flesh, to deliver Jews from the power of sin (vv. 13-25)." Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 427.

[49] Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 431.

[50] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 463-464.

agree with Moo's directions. Fitzmyer adds two unique trends, psychological and Christian, while Moo speaks of Israel. Fitzmyer argues that the trends in interpretation "trivialize Paul's insight," because they fail to consider the *egō*'s encounter with sin and the law from a historical and corporate point of view. He says that "Paul views humanity as it was known to him through Jewish and Christian eyes, without Christ and in Christ."[51] For Fitzmyer, Rom 7 describes two distinct eras in the *egō*'s journey of faith: before and after Christ. The only concern Fitzmyer fails to address is the existential one. His conclusion presupposes that the struggle described in Rom 7 is irrelevant to the believer. Frank J. Matera holds that the focus of Rom 7 is the (Mosaic) law. The culprit in this narrative is not the law, but sin.[52] He accepts but tweaks Fitzmyer's position on the *egō*: "Paul is not speaking of the present experience of the Christian but describing the experience of those who are not in Christ *as seen from the perspective of one who is in Christ*."[53] For Matera, Rom 7 is not a longitudinal reflection, but a latitudinal one: it is the Christ-believer's assessment of those not "in Christ," not the faith-journey of a Christ-believer. Romans 7 describes the situation of an Adamic person living "outside Christ." Michael Gorman echoes Matera's stance: "Paul is using the 'I' to speak representatively as a believer about the experience of nonbelievers: either Jews or people in general who are outside the Messiah." The weight of this argument rests on Paul's insistence on the slavery of the *egō* to sin. The pathetic plight of the *egō*, Gorman says, is "his [Paul's] perspective on unredeemed

[51] Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 465. Fitzmyer's hunch is correct, but his presumption that the terms "Jewish" and "Christian" were distinct categories (in the mid-first century) needs to be taken with some caution. No doubt, Christ was at the center of Paul's writings; however, it will be an egregious error to speak of "Jewish" and "Christian," especially in a before-and-after manner in Paul's undisputed letters.

[52] Frank J. Matera, *Romans* Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament, edited by Mikeal C. Parsons and Charles H. Talbert (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 164-165; Gorman also shares this view. Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters*, 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 437.

[53] Matera, *Romans*, 167. The italics is not mine; it is Matera's.

humanity seen through the prism of his redemption in Christ."[54] As exciting as this sounds, it makes an audacious, idyllic claim: the one "in Christ" is permanently freed from all Adamic tendencies.

The adherents of the existential reading make an incisive critique of the Adamic-person reading: it does not satisfactorily address the internal tension and struggle within the *egō*, as Paul's words evince: "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do" (Rom 7:19). This soliloquy is not referring to the internecine strife of only those "without Christ," but is the story of humanity. Matera's interpretation also deemphasizes the personal dimension of Paul's claims: it is not a personal struggle for Paul. No doubt, the *egō*'s conviction about life "in Christ" is crucial for any valid interpretation, but to sum up the internal struggle delineated by Paul merely as the assessment of those "without Christ" by those "in Christ" is less than satisfactory. Matera's claim implies that those "in Christ," for Paul, are exonerated from this dilemma: they are liberated from the shackles (power and inclination) of an Adamic humanity (which is true for the most part).

Matera further consolidates his claims: "The 'miserable one' [that Paul speaks off] … is not the Christ-believer but the one who is still in Adam."[55] In this rigid idea of the Christ-believer, Matera overlooks an unavoidable bewilderment in his reader: Is the Christ-believer permanently freed from every proclivity to sin? Matera's view, I believe, will be strengthened if he makes a distinction between the power of (slavery to) sin and the temptation (proclivity) to sin. The Adamic self that humanity is liberated from is the dominion of sin, distinct from the proclivity to sin. Both traits are characteristic features of the Adamic self. This distinction is partly the reason for divergence in opinion on this matter, especially for the existentialist. Matera also argues that the *egō*'s strife is not an incessant one; rather, it becomes history as

[54] Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 437.
[55] Matera, *Romans*, 179.

soon as the individual is reborn in Christ. Commonplace observation shows that the Adamic self that Paul describes remains in every individual and can only be checked (not obliterated) by the Spirit. Gorman remarks on this nuance: "While believers must struggle not to allow Sin to regain mastery … they do so on the assumption of their current liberation from Sin, not their slavery to it."[56] This balanced reading of Rom 7 is my stance in this thesis.

Richard Longenecker observes that the disagreements in interpretations (or directions, as Moo calls it) is largely due to the quest to harmonize both pericopes: Rom 7: 7:7-13 and 7:14-25. He says that there are two distinct uses of *egō* in both pericopes which is in line with Paul's tenses: the first is an autobiographical reference (Rom 7:7-13); and the second indicates the human plight (Rom 7:14-25).[57] Longenecker describes Rom 7:14-25 as Paul's "soliloquy" regarding the "tragic plight of people who attempt to live their lives apart from God," or, better still, those who depend on their resources or abilities.[58] He asserts that Rom 7:14-25 was initially used to address a Gentile audience during one of Paul's missions. Paul includes this material in his letter to the Christ-believers in Rome, because the contexts are similar. Longenecker insists that scholars were inclined to harmonize both pericopes, because of the similarity in vocabulary. But they ignored the discrepancy in tenses and the disclosure formula, *oidamen hoti* ("we know that"). Albeit Longenecker rightly notes the discrepancy in tenses, his conclusion is essentially the resuscitation of an autobiographical reading and a confirmation of the Adamic person. Although his approach offers a new insight into reading Rom 7, his conclusion leaves the existentialist concerns unresolved. I will now look at Paul's use of *nous* in Rom 7.

[56] Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 437.

[57] Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans* NIGTC, edited by I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 659.

[58] Ibid.

In Rom 7:23, 25, Paul speaks of *nous* as the rational faculty of the Adamic person or the *egō*. He says that there is a "law of the mind" (God's ordinances known to the human intellect) that operates in one's being, and a "law of sin" that resides in the members. With the *nous* (understanding), one is a slave to the law of God, while with the "flesh" (i.e., bodily members under the influence of sin) one is a slave to the law of sin.[59] The dichotomies Paul identifies are: first, the "law of the mind" and the "law of sin"; second, Adamic person (*egō*) and the members; third, the law of God and the law of sin. These dichotomies evince a relationship: first, the "law of the mind" resides in the Adamic person (*egō*) and seeks out the law of God; second, the law of sin resides in the members and engenders the "body of death." From Paul's dualism, the *nous* is at loggerheads with sin; it discerns the law of God, and resides in the Adamic person. *Nous* here refers to human reason (of the Adamic person). It is the means of assessing and interpreting God's will. It recognizes the ideal the *egō* ought to live by, but is hindered by the cravings of the "flesh," the human tendency to disobey God's precepts. *Nous* comprehends God's will; it is mindful of the demands of life in the Spirit, but is impeded by the Adamic cravings. This usage is congruous with LXX's. Brendan Byrne concurs with this reading. He asserts that *nous* refers to the human person as a "knowing, reasoning and judging being."[60] It is human reason. It is responsible for assessing human choices and processing God's laws. Byrne sees a literary connection between *egō* (Rom 7:22) and the "law of the *nous*"

[59] Paul uses "flesh" in both neutral and derogatory senses. In the neutral sense, "flesh" denotes humanity and physicality (Rom 1:3, 1 Cor 7:28, and 2 Cor 4:11). It is Paul's apt rendering of the Hebrew *basar*. In the negative sense, "flesh" refers to a way of life that is antithetical to God's Spirit (Rom 7:5, 8:8-9, and 8:12). It is a privation and blatant rejection of God's Spirit. Usually, when Paul contrasts "flesh" and "spirit," he is using the former in a derogatory way, even when it clearly denotes humanity. For instance, in Gal 5:16 the problem is evidently the "desires," not the "flesh" (the human body). When used without any qualification, "flesh" is the opposite of "Spirit" (Gal 5:17). The text reads: "Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh…." Flesh in Rom 7:23, 25 is opposed to God's law and is used in a derogatory sense.

[60] Brendan Byrne, *Romans* Sacra Pagina 6, edited by Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2007), 232.

(Rom 7:23). For Byrne, the "law of the *nous*" is synonymous with a person's internalization of the Mosaic law (or God's will), and its opposition to the person's subsequent choices. "The 'law of my *nous*' will therefore be the law of Moses … internalized and accepted as reasonable within me."[61] But Byrne claims that this notion of *nous* coheres more with Hellenistic anthropology than with the Semitic one.[62]

Leander E. Keck holds that *nous* in Rom 7 denotes the affirmations of the *egō*. The "law of the mind," Keck argues, is equivalent to the "law of God." He says: "'The law of my mind' does not refer to some sort of logic that governs cognitive processes but to what the inner self affirms, namely, God's law."[63] Keck insinuates that *nous* is a faculty of the disputed *egō*: it is not interchangeable with it. *Nous* differs from the *egō*. Keck's task of distinguishing the *egō* and *nous* is commendable. But his explanation that *nous* does not refer to human reasoning is not successful. The basic meaning of *nous* here is human reason which aligns it with the other uses found in Paul and in the NT. In addition to this, it is the faculty of the Adamic person, which gives it a special nuance.

The *Nous Christou* in 1 Cor 2:16

After a lengthy discussion on the distinction between divine and human wisdom, Paul returns to the issue of division, saying: "But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). This affirmation is the crux of the present thesis. For Paul, the *nous Christou* engenders *hē sophia tou theou* ("the wisdom of God") and the *pneumatikos* ("spiritual" person). Christ is both the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24); believers in him become partakers of this wisdom

[61] Ibid., 232-233.

[62] Byrne seems to be alluding to the Platonic *nous* that is imprisoned in the body. According to Plato's ethics, virtue is only possible if the cravings of the body are subdued by the *nous*. Plato's anthropology consistently demeans the body (or "flesh"). This is however not always the case with Paul.

[63] Keck, *Romans*, 191.

when they realize the futility of mundane wisdom and proclaim the wisdom of the cross. When believers deemphasize their personal interests (the causes of division) and prioritize their collegial call to be united in Christ Jesus, they will live in accordance with the cruciform gospel which Paul ardently proclaimed (1 Cor 2:2). The *nous Christou* enables believers to boast not in themselves, but in the Lord Jesus (1 Cor 1:31). But this describes the effects of possessing the *nous Christou* without defining it. I will define the *nous Christou* as a Spirit-inspired, Christ-like mindset that characterizes the *ekklēsia* as Christ's body (1 Cor 12:27), the temple of God's Spirit (1 Cor 3:16), and as God's field and building (1 Cor 3:9). This definition coalesces these elements: Spirit, mindset, *ekklēsia*, ontological quality, and Christ's concrete presence. It is informed by the belief that Paul is using the LXX's terminology (*nous* as mindset) and imbuing it with a concept of Hellenistic philosophy (*nous* as the One's self-communication). This means that the *nous Christou* primarily refers to a mindset (LXX), but it also signifies the Spirit's activity in the *ekklēsia* (Greek philosophy). My claim is not that Paul is necessarily relying on Greek philosophy, but that his allusion to the Spirit in the *nous Christou* is analogous to *nous* of Hellenistic philosophy. But Paul's *nous Christou* radically differs from the *nous* of Greek philosophy, because the *nous Christou* is the mindset of the *ekklēsia*, not just of individuals. However, like in Hellenistic philosophy, the *nous Christou* is an intrinsic quality of the *ekklēsia* that is perfected when the assembly looks in retrospection at the source of its being, the crucified Lord. The *nous Christou* also makes Christ present in the *ekklēsia*. Emma Wasserman tersely echoes my stance on Paul's eclectic use of both Hebrew and Greek traditions.[64] I will now treat separately the already-listed elements of the *nous Christou*.

[64] Emma Wasserman, "Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide? The Case of Pauline Anthropology in Romans 7 and 2 Corinthians 4—5," in *Christian Origins and Hellenistic Judaism: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts (Leiden: Boston, 2013), 278.

Prima facie, *nous* here seems identical with the preceding one (1 Cor 1:10), especially given Paul's citation of Isa 40:13, wherein *nous* means mindset. Here, the LXX uses words that suggest a mental activity: counselor, to instruct, to consult, and to teach (in Isa 40:14). The dominant verbs in these verses are to instruct and to teach: mental activities. Thus the LXX's translation of the MT's *ruah* as *nous* is mindful of the didactic environment of the word's usage. But Paul interprets *nous Kyriou* not simply as God's way of thinking, but as the "source" of God's actions, which is incomprehensible to humans. This principle is not merely an idea, but is the means of divine revelation, discernment, and divine probing into everything, including the depths of God (1 Cor 2:10). Paul identifies this "source" as God's Spirit. God's Spirit can discern every divine action (1 Cor 2:11). It makes human beings able to understand the divine gifts bestowed upon them (1 Cor 2:12). It confers discernment of divine wisdom on its recipients. Indeed, the primary difference between the spiritual ones and their worldly counterparts is the possession of God's Spirit (1 Cor 2:14). The Spirit changes the *ekklēsia*'s priority. It determines whether the *ekklēsia*'s concerns are worldly or spiritual (Spirit-filled); it evinces the assembly's notion of God's wisdom, either as foolishness or as God's power to save. Since having the *nous Christou* necessarily implies divine wisdom and being spiritual, it is the source of ecclesial transformation. F. C. Godet affirms the agency of the Spirit: "The Spirit is the agent … [through] whom this mind of God is communicated to the spiritual man."[65] I agree with Godet's point for two reasons: he acknowledges the agency of the Spirit, and he speaks of the Spirit's work as communication (reminiscent of Hellenistic *nous*). But I believe, unlike Godet, that the *nous Christou* is an ontological quality of the *ekklēsia*. Believers share in this quality by being a part of the *ekklēsia* (1 Cor 12:27).

[65] F. C. Godet, *Commentary on Saint Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, CFTL 27 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 163.

In Paul's explication and adaptation of Isa 40:13 in his writings, the original Hebrew word *ruah* resurfaces. His use of this prophetic verse resuscitates the underlying "Spirit of the Lord." God's Spirit in Second Isaiah is the Lord's means of intervening in human affairs and sustaining creatures. Paul appeals to Second Isaiah, mindful of the Lord's never-ceasing intervention in Israel's history. But this time, God's involvement causes the repudiation of the "wisdom of this age" and the "rulers of this age"; it inspires the enthronement of divine wisdom, and prompts the imposition of God's Spirit. Paul's creative and nuanced reading of Isaiah plays off his Hebrew interpretative framework. He was conversant with the tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures' interpretation, and appealed to it to reinforce his claims about the transforming action of God's Spirit. This is not to say that *nous* consistently means "spirit" in Paul; but rather, that the *nous Christou* implies God's Spirit, given the nuance Paul accords the term. Since I have demonstrated that the *nous Christou* is animated by God's Spirit, I will now explore the other qualities that are seldom mentioned: ontological quality, and Christ's concrete presence.

Jewett picks up the theme of *nous* as mindset: "That Paul did not make such a change (*pneuma* for *nous*) indicates he had something else in mind."[66] He insists that the "mindset" element must never be dismissed because Paul intended that meaning. Jewett describes the *nous Christou* as a constellation of beliefs and attitudes (mindset) that the Christian imbibes by being placed in the sphere of Christ's rule by God's Spirit.[67] Jewett's description retains three of the elements I listed above: Spirit, mindset, and *ekklēsia*. But it leaves out the intrinsic nature of the *nous Christou* and the concrete presence of Christ it elicits. Like all other phrases used for the *ekklēsia*, the *nous Christou* is characteristic of the assembly. It reveals the *ekklēsia*'s identity as a part of the metaphorical edifice of God. A list of Paul's notable analogies verifies

[66] Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms*, 363.
[67] Ibid., 362.

this: *hēmeis … echomen* (we have, 1 Cor 2:16), *este* (you are, 1 Cor 3:9), *este kai … en humin* (you are and … in you, 1 Cor 3:16), and *humeis … este* (you are, 1 Cor 12:27). Paul's consistent use of the plural verb indicates this. The *ekklēsia*'s identity as God's field and building, the temple of the Spirit, and the body of Christ is an unalterable quality. It is a static component of being an *ekklēsia* in the "name of the Lord." However, individual members of this *ekklēsia* occasionally lose sight of this. Thus Paul's constantly reminds the errant and straying members.

The other quality of the *nous Christou* that is rarely spoken of is Christ's presence. Paul's rhetoric in 1 Cor 1 implies that the perpetrators of division in the *ekklēsia* have been alienated from Christ crucified. Division in the *ekklēsia* is tantamount to division in Christ (1 Cor 1:3). The Spirit does not inculcate the *nous Christou* just to change the assembly's worldview, but to make them Christ-like, thereby making Christ concretely present in the *ekklēsia*. This function of spirits is found in 1 Cor 5:3. Paul believes that the human spirit is comparable to the divine Spirit (1 Cor 2:11). So, if Paul can speak about his presence through his spirit, God's Spirit too can make Christ present in the *ekklēsia*. If the *nous Christou* is inspired by the Spirit, it means that the mindset it imparts configures the *ekklēsia* into the *imago Christou*. This explains the source of Paul's authority over the Corinthians: "And I think too that I have the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 7:40). God's Spirit makes acting in accordance to the mind of Christ possible. Next, I will review scholarly contributions on this subject.

Richard H. Bell argues that the "mind of Christ" refers to an "organ of thought."[68] He disagrees with readings that render the phrase as spirit or mindset. He argues that God's mind is like an organ of thought for divine activity. He also claims that God's mind in the OT is identical with the divine heart, which is the core of divine personality. Thus he says that "organ

[68] Richard H. Bell, "'But We Have the Mind of Christ': Some Theological and Anthropological Reflections on 1 Corinthians 2:16," *Horizons in Hermeneutics: A Festschrift in Honor of Anthony C. Thiselton*, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Matthew R. Malcolm (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 184-185.

of thought" preserves Paul's intention in this verse, which is *participation* and not *imitation* (for those who allude to Phil 2:6-11).[69] I absolutely agree with Bell's last point: Paul's claim was that of participation and not imitation, if it is rightly understood (as a Spirit-inspired of the *ekklēsia*). But Bell does not clearly state how this participation takes place. In my opinion, participation in Christ is through the *ekklēsia*, not just through individuals. I also disagree with Bell's OT interpretation of *nous* as an organ of thought. While Bell is right in saying that the LXX's *nous* is rooted in the Hebrew *lev*, he misses the nuances of *lev* in the OT. In chapter one, I argued that the LXX only translates *lev* as *nous* if at least one out of three conditions are met: first, when the context suggests a mental activity, like understanding or thought; second, when heart is used figuratively; and third, whenever a verb that denotes a mental activity is employed. So in the LXX's use of *nous*, the physical denotation of *lev* had already been expunged. Bell's claim that *nous* is an "organ" of thought is not convincing, at least not from the standpoint of the LXX's usage. Whenever a "physical" organ is intended by the Hebrew text, the LXX uses *kardia*, not *nous*. But if Bell's "organ" is nuanced to mean a "source" for action that is inspired and animated by the Spirit, it would be in accord with Paul's claims in this verse.

Anthony C. Thiselton argues that the *nous Christou* recalls the Hebrew word *ruah*. He admits that *nous* means mindset, and not merely an "organ of thinking," as Bell argues. This mindset, Thiselton says, is elucidated in Phil 2:6-11. He maintains that the *nous Christou* must not be confused with the Spirit, adding that Paul makes a distinction between the two in 1 Cor 14:14.[70] I agree with Thiselton's arguments that the *nous Christou* refers to a mindset informed by Christ's Spirit, and that Paul's quote from Isa 40:13 retains the idea of "spirit." But I disagree with Thiselton's approach for three reasons: first, he presumes that *nous* has a monolithic

[69] Ibid., 187.

[70] Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 275-276.

meaning in Paul; second, he makes no effort to explain the transition from *ruah* (spirit) to *nous* (mindset); and third, he does not distinguish the human spirit from the divine Spirit.[71] Surely, readers will be interested in the grounds for his transition from *ruah* to *nous*, and then *pneuma*. Regarding the first, Thiselton's basis for dismissing any interpretation that considers the *nous Christou* to be Christ's Spirit is not persuasive. The passage he cites does not use *nous* as mindset (1 Cor 14:14). The idea of *nous* here is the human mind unaided by the Spirit's gift: interpretation of tongues. This usage is distinct, although related, to mindset. But Thiselton does not notice this. The context is that of speaking in tongues. Paul argues in favor of translating what is spoken in tongues in order to build up the *ekklēsia*. Paul says that at prayer, if the spirit prays but the *nous* does not, the *ekklēsia* is not edified. But if the gift of interpretation (by implication) is exercised after speaking in tongues, the *ekklēsia* is edified. So *nous* evidently functions as human reason enlightened by the Spirit's gift. This passage presents a different notion of *nous* (human mind) and does not constitute a solid ground for dismissing readings in favor of God's Spirit.

Second, Thiselton correctly observes that Paul was relying on Isa 40:13, wherein *nous Kyriou* (the Lord's mind) occurs. But he does not attempt to establish the nuances between the LXX's usage and that of Paul. The LXX translates *ruah* as *nous*, because the context suggests thought. This has been discussed at length in chapter one. Thiselton rightly hints that Paul's *nous* resuscitates YHWH's *ruah*. The third weakness in his arguments is the blurred distinction between the human spirit (1 Cor 14:14) and God's Spirit (1 Cor 2:16; 3:16). The *nous Christou* does not refer to the human spirit, but to God's Spirit. This blurred premise is the ground for his conclusion that since *nous* and *pneuma* are distinct, the *nous Christou* cannot be God's Spirit. Now if we maintain a clear distinction between *nous* as a contrary for the human spirit

[71] *Pneuma Christou* is the phrase Thiselton uses to explain the *nous Christou*. This phrase does not appear in First Corinthians. It is merely an illustration.

(1 Cor 14:14) and the *nous Christou* as the embodiment of God's Spirit (1 Cor 2:16), his argument will be non sequitur. However, Thiselton's phrasing of the problem is remarkably accurate: a Spirit-informed, Christ-like mindset. To this I will add: it also an ontological feature that characterizes the *ekklēsia* (not just individuals).

Gordon D. Fee opines that the *nous Christou* denotes Christ's mindset as proclaimed by Paul's gospel of the crucified Lord. He says that this idea of Christ is firmly anchored in his crucifixion. Identifying with the crucified Lord is the means to communal transformation. For Fee, this is the true meaning of being "spiritual." He writes: "'Being spiritual' does not lead to elitism; it leads to a deeper understanding of God's profound mystery—redemption through a crucified Messiah."[72] Fee admits too that this teaching of Paul has been widely misunderstood by many Christian sects. He claims that the belief that being "spiritual" makes one a religious elite is false and grossly misleading. I partially concede to Fee's point on the *nous Christou*: as a Christ-like mindset. But he overlooks the source of this mindset and the one it primarily belongs to. The "source" of the *nous Christou* is the Spirit, and it primarily belongs to the *ekklēsia*, as its ontological characteristic.

George H. van Kooten argues that Paul and Philo both share a common Greek anthropology—*nous-psyche-sōma*—albeit with some adaptations: *pneuma*.[73] He says that one of the distinctive features of Paul and Philo's anthropology is the emphasis on "the identical, pneumatic nature of God and man in a far more egalitarian and accessible way."[74] This means that in Paul and Philo, *nous* is not solely the privilege of the elite, but is generously offered to

[72] Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* Revised Edition NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 129.

[73] Kooten states that Philo and Paul share a tripartite classification of the human being: mind (*nous*), soul (*psychē*), and body (*sōma*). Both consider *nous* or spirit to be the highest part of the human being.

[74] George H. van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity* WUNT 232, edited by Jörg Frey (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 311.

everyone. Van Kooten implies that *nous* is the individual's means of participating in divine life. He also claims that *nous* and *pneuma* are not synonymous in Paul. Citing 1 Cor 14:14, he says that *nous* is contrasted with *pneuma*. Van Kooten's work presumes a rigid, operative anthropological framework in Paul. He assumes that Paul's use of *nous* is the same throughout his letters. He insinuates that Paul's *nous* is identical to that of Philo, and to Neoplatonism by extension. I disagree with these last three presuppositions of van Kooten. First, we have already seen that Paul's use of *nous* is fluid: it can mean mindset or understanding. The evidence in the undisputed letters of Paul does not give us the grounds to speak of a monolithic anthropology of Paul. Rather, his terms need to be understood and interpreted in their rhetorical and literary contexts. Regarding Paul's similarity to Philo, the account in Gen 2:7, which was discussed in chapter one can hardly substantiate this claim. In his exegesis, Philo argues that the life-giving breath Adam received at creation was *nous*. There is no evidence in Paul (and indeed in the NT) for such an interpretation of *nous*. Paul holds that God's Spirit is the principle of animation in the *ekklēsia*, not the *nous* (1 Cor 3:16). Van Kooten also presumes that the *nous Christou* primarily refers to the individual members of the *ekklēsia*. This presumption goes against Paul's arguments: "You are God's building and field" (1 Cor 3:9); "You are the Spirit's temple" (1 Cor 3:16); and "You are the body of Christ" (1 Cor 12:27). Paul's reference is always in the plural. His concern is the *ekklēsia*. But the members are individually parts of the *ekklēsia* (1 Cor 12:27). So van Kooten's argument that *nous* is the part of the human being that receives divine life is not Pauline. But van Kooten's analysis of *nous* is comparable to the Spirit's role in the *ekklēsia*. In Paul, the Spirit is the divine element in the *ekklēsia*. It is the *ekklēsia*'s point of contact with the divine: the Lord.

Martine Oldhoff, in contrast to van Kooten, opines that Paul cannot be "locked in either a 'Jewish' or 'Greek' box."[75] Paul, Oldhoff says, employs the prevalent anthropologies of his time to proclaim the gospel of Christ. Paul's anthropology is eclectic and cannot be identified with any specific ideology. Rather, Oldhoff insists, "Paul qualifies this [that is, the Pauline] anthropology by emphasizing *mind*fulness through God's Spirit."[76] God's Spirit, for Oldhoff, is distinct from the impersonal substance in Philo's exegesis. In addition, Oldhoff, to resolve the Jewish-Greek anthropological controversy, argues that *nous* receives the Spirit. Rather than postulate a new anthropology, she claims that Paul adapted his teaching on God's Spirit into an already-existing conceptual framework that his audience would recognize. She insists that both (the Greek and Paul's) anthropological frameworks are distinct. Paul's use of *nous* in both 1 Cor 2:16 and 14:13-19, Oldhoff affirms, are consistent. The Spirit fits into this already-existent framework by residing in the *nous* (that is, the human mind). Oldhoff's explanation makes Paul's "renewal of the mind" intelligible. But she fails to distinguish the various nuances Paul gives to *nous*. The two passages Oldhoff cites above, for instance, have two distinct senses—mindset and human reason. She also falls into the very temptation she wanted to avoid: putting Paul's terms into a conceptual pigeonhole. In 1 Cor 3:16, Paul unambiguously says that *naos theou este* (you are the temple of God) and that *to pneuma tou theou oikei en humin* (the God's Spirit lives in you). The first part of the quote identifies the *ekklēsia* as "God's temple," while the second part unequivocally states that God's Spirit resides (has made a home) in the *ekklēsia*. The images used (temple and home) suggest stability and concreteness. In both cases, the *ekklēsia* is called the abode of God's Spirit, not the individuals, and certainly, not the *nous*. Oldhoff's attempt to systematize Paul's *nous* is impressive, but unsuccessful. Oldhoff falls prey

[75] The "Jewish box" that Martine Oldhoff is referring to is *pneuma-psyche-sōma*, while the "Greek box" is *nous-psyche-sōma*. Oldhoff, "Pauline Mindfulness? Paul's Interaction with Trichotomic Anthropology" *NTT 70*, 3 (2016): 196, 211.

[76] Oldhoff, "Pauline Mindfulness," 211. The italics is not mine.

to this, because of her selective consideration of Paul's *nous* and her disregard for other occurrences of the term. But she is right in emphasizing "mindfulness through God's Spirit." This is my argument in this thesis.

Carl S. Sweatman elegantly ties together the elements I am arguing for. He delineates the *nous Christou* using apt terminologies: "cruciform" (Christ-like), "mind and mode of discernment" and "new epistemology" (mindset), "revealed by the Spirit" and "given and maintained by the Spirit" (Spirit-inspired), "new and distinctive framework" (ontological character), and "believers" and "individually and corporately" (*ekklēsia*).[77] Although the thrust of his article was not on Paul's Hellenistic influence, Sweatman arrives at a valid interpretation of the *nous Christou* by considering Paul's rhetorical use of the concept. He provisionally describes the *nous Christou* as the "new epistemology [that] defines appropriate behaviors and equips believers with the ability to recognize or discern when the boundaries of appropriateness are either confused or transgressed—not just individually but corporately."[78] I absolutely agree with Sweatman's reading of the *nous Christou*, especially his broad-minded understanding of the idea as a principle that foregrounds Paul's other arguments. In summary, *nous* in Paul's writings has two basic meanings: mindset and human reason. There are two exceptions to this pattern: in Rom 7:23, 25, *nous* denotes human reason as a faculty of the Adamic person; while in 1 Cor 2:16, it means a Spirit-inspired, communal mindset that characterizes the *ekklēsia* as a visible Christ. As such, the *nous Christou* is a sort of an ontological quality of the assembly which individuals in the *ekklēsia* participate in. Paul's usage imbues the LXX's terminology with an analogous Greek concept. When coalesced, the *nous Christou* becomes a Christ-like mindset (LXX) that characterizes the *ekklēsia* (as its ontological feature), which is animated and inspired by the Spirit (Hellenistic), and makes Christ concretely present in the community.

[77] Carl S. Sweatman, "The Spirit and the Communal Mind of Christ: Looking Again at 1 Corinthians 2:16," *SCJ 18* (Fall, 2015): 238-239.

[78] Ibid., 238.

Scholars miss this reading because of these presuppositions: first, they presume that the Pauline letters have a monolithic notion of *nous*; second, they are unable to determine the context for Paul's contrasting of *nous* and *pneuma* in 1 Cor 14:14; third, they do not strive to ascertain, or completely ignore, the influence of the LXX's *nous* on Paul; fourth, they are disinterested in carrying out a survey of *nous* in Paul (thirteen instances unattended to); fifth, they cannot reconcile the influences of the LXX and Greek philosophy Paul's *nous Christou*; and lastly, they cannot harmonize the Spirit's role in the *nous Christou* as its animating force with mindset. I will now investigate the use of *nous* in the disputed letters of Paul.

Nous in the Disputed Letters of Paul

Nous features in each of the disputed letters. It is consistently used in the same sense throughout the disputed letters: as mindset. Each usage, interestingly, evokes Paul's address to the Gentiles in Rom 1:18-32. *Nous* denotes a perverted mindset that is prone to immorality and ungodliness. In some verses, there are remarkable agreements in vocabulary and imagery with Paul's presentation in Rom 1.[79] In Eph 4:17, the *ekklēsia* is discouraged from living like the Gentiles. The text reads: "You must no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds (*nous*)." This admonition recalls Paul's argument against the Gentile in Rom 1:18-32. Both texts portray Gentiles (from a Jewish perspective): futility of minds, darkened understanding, alienation from divine life, hearts marked by ignorance and hardness, licentiousness, greed, and impurity. These vices characterize the Jewish description of Gentiles. Both texts contain similar vocabulary: "futility (*mataiotēti*) of mind" (Eph 4:17), "futile (*emataiōthesan*) in thinking" (Rom 1:21); "darkened (*eskotōmenoi*) in understanding (Eph 4:18), "senseless minds were darkened (*eskotisthē*)" (Rom 1:21); and "every kind of

[79] The observed similarity of vocabulary to Romans 1 is not an implicit argument in favor of Paul's undisputed authorship, but a recognition of the Pauline spirit and "mindset" that pervades these writings.

impurity (*akatharsias*)" (Eph 4:19), "hearts to impurity (*akatharsian*)" (Rom 1:24). This indicates that both authors, if not the same person, were influenced by the same Jewish perception of the Gentiles, which was a commonplace in the first century CE.

In Eph 4:17, *nous* implies mindset. This is evident from the content of the passage and the other parallel expressions used by the author: "darkened in thinking (*dianoia*)" and "ignorance and stubbornness of heart (*kardia*)." "Futility of mind" refers to a mindset that alienates the individual from God's life; it is a choice to degrade oneself by indulging in all forms of promiscuity and immorality; it is a return to the former self, which is described as "deluded and corrupted" by lusts (Eph 4:22). The other instance of *nous* in Eph 4:23 retains the notion of mindset by encouraging the "renewal of the mind in the Spirit." If the mind of the Ephesians is renewed, they will live righteously and in accordance with their vocation as *imago Dei* (Eph 4:24). The renewed mindset is called the "new human" (Eph 4:24). The new human eschews falsehood, deceit, greed, and any vice that threatens the *ekklēsia*. The new human puts aside dissension, anger, rancor, and slander. Having the right mindset, or living like the new human, also facilitates the building up of the body of Christ, which is a recurrent theme for this author (Eph 4:12, 29).

In Col 2:18, the author urges the Colossians to be on their guard against those with a "fleshy" (worldly) mindset: those who brandish philosophy, deception, and human tradition (Col 2:8); those who advocate for dietary laws and the observance of the festive calendar (Col 2:16); and those who insist on self-abasement, the worship of angels, and visions (Col 2:17). The author regards these concerns as peripheral and not as the core of the *ekklēsia*'s faith in Christ. He argues that being reborn in Christ through baptism (Col 2:12) means that the believer has been "spiritually circumcised," and that the "foreskin" of the flesh (the old mindset) is cut off so as to put on Christ. "The mind (*nous*) of flesh," in this verse, alludes to a way of thinking that prioritizes superficial practices and human traditions to the detriment of the *ekklēsia*'s faith

in Christ. The NRSV understands this phrase accordingly when it translates it as: "a human way of thinking." The reference to some members' preoccupation with dietary laws, festive days in the Jewish calendar, and self-abasement (or fasting) evokes a similar theme found in Romans. Paul uses *nous* in the context of asking the Romans to adjudicate rightly. But unlike Colossians, Rom 14:5 employs *nous* as human reasoning, not as a mindset (although both seem related). However, the same issues are addressed in Rom 14:5-6: Jewish festive days and fasting. Perhaps *nous* is deferred to in peripheral matters, because Paul and the author of the Colossians believe that human judgment should be applied to non-integral matters. This also means that these sacred writers are confident in the *ekklēsia*'s ability to make the right choice, if they use their *nous* rightly.

In 1 Tim 6:5, *nous* also means mindset. The text reads: "And wrangling among those who are depraved in mind (*nous*) and bereft of the truth…." The context for this quote is the admonition of slaves to be loyal to their masters. First Timothy argues that believing slaves perform praiseworthy deeds by being faithful to their masters. It suggests that stirring up revolt against slave owners, or refusing to be submissive to them, is contrary to the "sound words" of Christ and the teaching that is in accordance with godliness (1 Tim 6:3). So to be a loyal and submissive slave is to be a godly (pious) person. Godliness (*eusebeia*), or piety, is a key word in First Timothy. It is contrasted with arrogance, ignorance, inordinate craving for controversy and disputes (1 Tim 6:4). Godliness is also the surest way to maintain the status quo; it assures the *ekklēsia* of peace and order by promoting the respect of established societal stratification. First Timothy plays "safe" by urging slaves to be submissive to their masters; the contrary, in the Roman Empire of the first century, would have resulted in a bloodbath. A depraved mindset, in this letter, refers those who are poised to sow the seed of disunity and civil unrest. The depraved mindset is aptly described by the Greek *diaparatribai*, which means constant friction. Those whose ways of thinking are perverted are inclined to cause friction in the smooth

ordering of society and to foment chaos and dissension. The right mindset to have, for First Timothy, is that which respects civil legislature and political order, and promotes the household codes in families. A depraved mindset is also bereft of the truth and lacking in understanding, because it is perceived to be self-serving and not society-minded.

Affirming the polarity of the depraved mind and the truth, 2 Tim 3:8 describes the "corrupt mind" as a "counterfeit (or rejected) faith" and as an opposition to the truth. The author's fear appears to be the household commotion—and, possibly, tension—caused by these "lovers of themselves," who have a warped mindset. Second Timothy 3:2-4 describes people who subscribe to this mindset as a good-for-nothing bunch. Beneath the concerns of faith, the author seems to be worried about the political and social implications of the reckless behavior prompted by a corrupt mindset. They are once again called arrogant and conceited people, because they have rejected all forms of advice and caution. Hence, the community members are urged to keep away from them, since they will surely bring trouble (2 Tim 3:5). These troublemakers, those of corrupt mindset, are described as having only the "outward form of godliness." Perhaps the author is cautioning the naïve ones not to be deceived by their feigning of godliness, or by their sheer pretense. *Nous* here undoubtedly denotes mindset—a way of thinking that is perverted, dangerous and destructive.

The Letter to Titus reinforces the need to expunge all those responsible for causing social unrest from the *ekklēsia*: obstruction of smooth order and the upsetting of families in various households. Titus was charged with the primary responsibility of putting in "order what remained to be done" (Titus 1:5). To do this, he had to appoint a credible person as an *episkopos* to "preach with sound doctrine and refute those who contradicted it" (Titus 1:9). Titus suggests that the greatest threat to the *ekklēsia* was disunity and "rebellion" mostly occasioned by "those of the circumcision." The author of Titus is convinced that the surest way to preserve the community's unity is to establish a structure that would guarantee sound doctrine. The *ekklēsia*

here is undoubtedly beyond the stage of primary evangelization. It is now seeking to define its identity and preserve its legacy. Sound teaching and an effective hierarchy are crucial traits at this stage of ecclesial evolution. It is in this context that the author uses *nous* to describe the corrupt mindset of the rebellious faction. The text reads: "To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure. Their very minds (*nous*) and consciences are corrupted" (Titus 1:15). The corrupt mindset, for Titus, involves any worldview that jeopardizes the peace and harmony that exists in the *ekklēsia*. The perverted mindset can be described further by looking at the contrary qualities in the *episkopos*'s prerequisite list: blameworthy, immoral, rebellious, arrogant, quick-tempered, drunk, violent, and greedy for gain (Titus 1:6-7). For Titus, the *episkopos* is the antithesis of the corrupt mindset. In terms of vocabulary, *nous* in Titus is different from that of Romans. The verb that describes *nous* is *miainō*; and, in place of *kardia*, Titus pairs *suneidēsis* (conscience) with *nous*. The context shows that Titus is addressing a problem similar to that faced by the other pastoral letters. He is grappling with a situation of factions in (and perhaps outside) the church competing for supremacy. Titus knows quite well that division and selfish ambitions will ruin the nascent *ekklēsia*. Hence, the detractors are unequivocally condemned and publicly denounced. Their malicious intentions are wittily summed up in the phrase: *pros pan ergon agathon adokimoi* ("unfit for any good work").

Nous in Other NT Books

Apart from the Pauline letters, *nous* features only in Luke and in Revelation. In both books, *nous* indicates human understanding or the rational faculty aided and illumined by divine revelation. *Nous* appears in the concluding narrative of Luke, where Jesus appears to the eleven disciples and their companions and convinces them that he is risen. He explains the meaning of the Paschal mystery to the disciples by appealing to "the law of Moses, the prophets

and the psalms." The same verb used in Luke 24:45 (*dianoigō*) appears in Luke 24:31, where Jesus reveals himself to two disciples at Emmaus: "Then their eyes were *opened*, and they recognized him…." In both contexts, Luke reports an "unveiling" of the understanding of the disciples to the person of the risen Christ: in Luke 24:31, *dianoigō* refers to the "opening" of the two disciples' "eyes" after the breaking of bread; in Luke 24:45, *dianoigō* delineates the "opening" of the understanding of the eleven disciples to the Paschal event.[80] Luke skillfully uses both appearance stories to enlighten his audience about the significance of the Christ-event. Luke's frequent association of Christ's death with his resurrection buttresses this motif: "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:26): and "Thus it is written that the Christ is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day" (Luke 24:46). From this rhetoric in his Gospel, it is evident that *nous* in Luke 24:45 denotes human understanding or the faculty of reasoning (aided by divine revelation). Jesus here unveils the rational faculty of the disciples so that they can comprehend his passion and resurrection as it was prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures.

In the visions about the beast in Rev 13, the author describes the deification of a Roman Emperor (most likely, Nero Caesar).[81] He says that all those who refuse to worship the beast will be put to death. The author also claims that there cannot be commerce without the mark of this beast.[82] To trade, everyone needs to be marked on the right hand or forehead (Rev 13:16). This alludes to the phylacteries ordinarily worn by Jews (Matt 23:5). But in Revelation, the author reports the incorporation of the Emperor's insignia into the religious phylactery

[80] The "opening" of the disciples' "eyes" is a metaphorical term for divine revelation. It simply means that Jesus made the Paschal mystery intelligible to the disciples.

[81] Wilfrid J. Harrington believes that the imperial cult referred to here is related to Rev 13:18 where 666 (Greek for *Nerōn Caesar*) or 616 (Hebrew for *Nero Caesar*) is used. He claims that the number is a code for the Emperor. Harrington, *Revelation* Sacra Pagina 16, edited by Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1993), 144.

[82] Ibid., 143.

worn by Jews involved in commerce.[83] The necessity of the beast's mark for trade might also allude to the currency in use at the time. Most currencies would bear the image of the incumbent emperor (Mark 12:17). Regardless of the actual historical circumstance, the author wants his audience to realize that his symbolic language needs to be deciphered through a divinely inspired *nous*. The text reads: "This calls for wisdom: let anyone with understanding (*nous*) calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a person" (Rev 13:18). *Nous* here points to human reason (illumined by divine revelation). It is the power of discerning the cryptic language in a vision. Because he wrote during a time of fierce persecution, the author opted for a symbolic form of writing that concealed his message.

In Rev 17:9, a similar phrase is used to introduce *nous*: *hōde ho nous ho echōn sophian* (Rev 17:9); compare *hōde hē sophia … ho echōn noun* (Rev 13:18). Both sentences feature four similar words: *hōde* (here, or in this place), *sophia* (wisdom), *echōn* (having), and *nous* (understanding). The adverb *hōde* draws the audience's attention to the immediate context and buttresses the need to unpack the symbolic language. This appears to be typical of apocalyptic literature. The author uses *hōde* to tell the reader that his writing is encrypted and needs decoding. In Matthew, *hōde* connotes physical proximity: "We have nothing here (*hōde*) but five loaves and two fish" (Matt 14:17); and "there are some standing here (*hōde*)…." (Matt 16:28). The author of Revelation opts for literary "proximity." Deciphering the text is not solely a human endeavor, but requires the guidance of divine revelation.[84] The author wants his readers to know that his graphic tales require divine illumination to make his message humanly intelligible.

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[83] Jean-Pierre Ruiz, "Commentary on Revelation," *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: An Ecumenical Study Bible* NRSV, edited by Michael D. Coogan et al. (New York: Oxford University, 2010), 2170.

[84] Harrington claims that *hōde* alludes to the "shrewdness that can interpret this riddle." He thus believes the reference here is to natural wit, not divine inspiration. I, however, think that the whole book is designed to be a "revelation" and so requires God's light.

Summary

Paul uses *nous* in two primary senses in the undisputed letters of Paul: mindset and reason. The exceptions to this pattern, as noted above, are Rom 7:23, 25 and 1 Cor 2:16. In the former, *nous* refers to the rational faculty of the Adamic person, while in the latter, the *nous Christou* denotes a Spirit-inspired, Christ-like mindset that characterizes the *ekklēsia*. Scholars in their attempt to explain the *nous Christou* ignored the other occurrences of *nous* in the Pauline letters (thirteen instances). They tend to look only at 1 Cor 14. Consequently, the preponderant interpretations overemphasize the distinction between *nous* and *pneuma* (thus insinuating that the *nous Christou* is not Spirit-inspired) without trying to understand the function of *nous* in 1 Cor 14. Another fallacy committed by these scholars is the assumption that Paul's *nous* is monolithic throughout his writings. There is no decent attempt to unearth the nuances in Paul's employment of *nous*. Rather, exegetes invest their energies in showing that *nous* is distinct from *pneuma* without looking at the wider context in First Corinthians. Another defective approach to the study of 1 Cor 2:16 is the preoccupation with Paul's Hellenistic influence. This orientation misleads many into thinking that the *nous Christou* comes from Greek philosophy, and that it primarily means an individual's mindset.

In the disputed Pauline letters, *nous* frequently denotes mindset. It is noteworthy that these writings share much vocabulary and the worldview of the undisputed letters of Paul, especially with Romans 1. In these letters, *nous* delineates dispositions or lifestyles that are at variance with the cruciform gospel. In terms of the notion of *nous* and its shared vocabulary, these writings are akin to the authentic letters of Paul. It is striking that *nous* is a key concept in the pastorals, especially in the repudiation of the dissident and intransigent members of the *ekklēsia*. The pastorals consistently employ *nous* in the context of communal organization, societal stratification, and the household codes. Those with a depraved *nous* cause division in

the *ekklēsia* and endanger the smooth ordering of the society, which the authors believe was sanctioned by the Lord.

In Luke and Revelation, *nous* means human reason or understanding. In Luke, *nous* is the feature that enables the disciples to comprehend the mystery of Christ's passion and resurrection and to see it as the fulfillment of the prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures. In Revelation, *nous* is the human faculty required to decipher the heavily encoded apocalyptic writing. It empowers the audience of this symbolic literature to transcend the imagery and to attain to the true affirmations of the author. *Nous*, in Revelation, is a fundamental function of human beings: rationality guided by divine inspiration. *Nous* is that innate human ability to apply commonsense or some wit to a divinely inspired message packed with imageries and arrive at its essential truth. *Nous* here explicitly refers to human reason; but it implicitly presupposes the audience's guidance by God's Spirit. In the next chapter, we shall investigate Paul's application of the *nous Christou* (as a Christ-like disposition that is engraved into the *ekklēsia* by God's Spirit) to the relevant issues at Corinth.

CHAPTER THREE

THE *NOUS CHRISTOU*: THE SOURCE OF COMMUNAL TRANSFORMATION

Although the *nous Christou* occurs only once in First Corinthians, I will argue that it is the foundation for all of Paul's responses to the pertinent issues at Corinth. The presence of the *nous Christou* in the *ekklēsia* leads to consideration for the weak (1 Cor 8:9); it forestalls division in the church (1 Cor 3:11); it makes the *ekklēsia* other-centered (1 Cor 9:22); it builds up the assembly into the Christ's body (1 Cor 8:1); it suppresses factions (1 Cor 1:10); and it upholds the primacy of love (1 Cor 16:14). The *nous Christou* is the pith of the Pauline *ekklēsia*; it is the moral compass for navigating "grey areas" in Corinthian ethics; it is the determinant of what is acceptable and what is not; and, above all, it is the source of communal transformation. Before investigating Paul's application of this concept in his various replies, I

will recapitulate my understanding of the *nous Christou* as established in the preceding chapter. It is a Spirit-inspired Christ-like mindset that ontologically characterizes the *ekklēsia* as Christ's body, thereby making him concretely present in the assembly. This definition (the first of its kind) has six key features: Christ-like, mindset, Spirit-inspired, ontological character, *ekklēsia*, and concrete presence. Each of these features underlies Paul's responses to the problems in First Corinthians. Before delving into the schema of Paul's exhortations, I will unpack the principal features of the *nous Christou*.

The first quality of the *nous Christou* is "Christ-like." Being "Christ-like" entails manifesting an identity that is ontologically dependent upon and connected to the risen Lord. It makes the *ekklēsia* a recognizable expression of the crucified and risen Lord. Second, the *nous Christou* is a mindset. As a mindset, it is the source for all ethical decision-making and moral evaluations. Even though the *nous Christou* is not interchangeable with the observable moral decisions that Paul upholds in his responses, it is nevertheless the ontological base for every decision taken regarding the *ekklēsia*. Third, and most important, the *nous Christou* is inspired and animated by the Spirit. The Spirit is the source of this ontological character in the *ekklēsia*. The Spirit is the agent that reveals divine things and makes the *ekklesia* Christ-like. The Spirit defines and engraves the Christ-like mindset on the *ekklēsia*. The Spirit is also the active and operative principle in the *nous Christou*. Fourth, the *nous Christou* is an ontological character that inextricably bounds the *ekklēsia* to Christ. Being an "ontological" character, the *ekklēsia* is always "in possession" of this quality.[85] Thus activities pertaining to the *ekklēsia* are necessarily instances for manifesting this quality. So Paul apparently appeals to this implicit quality in addressing the reported cases. Fifth, the *nous Christou* is primarily a quality belonging to the *ekklēsia*, and not just to individuals. This means that Paul's address regarding

[85] "In possession," however, does not mean that the *ekklēsia* will always act in accordance with this mindset. Rather, it implies that the *nous Christou* the moral compass for assessing the decisions and choices of the *ekklēsia*.

the *ekklēsia* always presumes this notion. The *nous Christou*, since it is inextricably linked to the *ekklēsia*'s existence and identity, must underlie every issue pertaining to the assembly. Based on this assumption, I will argue that the *nous Christou* foregrounds all of Paul's responses. Lastly, the *nous Christou* makes Christ concretely present in the *ekklēsia*. The *nous Christou* is not just an ontological reality; rather, it is a Spirit-inspired *nous* with a purpose: to make Christ concretely present in the *ekklēsia*, or put differently, to make the *ekklēsia* a real expression of Christ. This purpose is essential if the *ekklēsia* is to be truly Christ's body. I will now explain the latent dynamics in Paul's responses.

Paul identifies the following areas of concern in Corinth: division, sexual immorality, food offered to idols, abuse of the Lord's Supper, and misunderstanding of spiritual gifts.[86] He tackles these reported cases in a very predictable manner: he bemoans the incongruity of such practices to the *ekklēsia*'s nature; he explicates the intrinsic aberration of such trends using apt analogies; he proffers a fitting model of a Spirit-inspired *ekklēsia*; and he sternly reprimands the culprits. Put tersely, Paul's formulaic response reads: complaint, explanation, analogy, and verdict.[87] Paul's reply structure makes this claim obvious: the *nous Christou* is the ontological trait that empowers his analytical and interpretative framework for evaluating all the issues reported to him. The fundamental and salient presupposition that foregrounds Paul's reasoning is, "But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). I will argue that Paul's stance is not only corrective and judgmental, but is pedagogical and hortatory. It encapsulates Paul's recapitulation of the cruciform gospel and the church's identity as Christ's body. This analysis will also reveal that the *nous Christou* is not only applicable to the issue of division, but cuts

[86] The problems to be studied are not exhaustive, but illustrative. Not every problem in First Corinthians will be treated; but those examined will suffice to establish a pattern and to make a case for all *nous Christou*-inspired exhortations.

[87] This structure is not monolithic or linear; it only offers a useful way of analyzing Paul's responses. For my purposes in this chapter, this pattern presents a reliable and easy way of recognizing all *nous Christou*-inspired decisions and judgments.

across all other cases handled by Paul. So, in line with my thesis, the *nous Christou* is the Spirit-inspired ontological framework that engenders ecclesial *Christification*.[88] I shall now investigate the problem of division and its impact on the *ekklēsia*'s *nous Christou*.

Division in First Corinthians

The overriding problem Paul identifies in First Corinthians is division. The presence of division in the *ekklēsia* belies a Spirit-inspired mindset and thus indicates the absence of the *nous Christou*. Paul introduces the problem of division using the phrase: "What I mean is that…" (1 Cor 1:12). Citing the source of the complaint, he says that "Chloe's people" reported the sad incident to him. Paul ironically addresses these unwelcome circumstances: "Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul" (1 Cor 1:13)? These questions all have a name in common: Christ. The first question explicitly mentions Christ; the second alludes to Christ's crucifixion; the third evokes the baptism of believers into the death and resurrection of Christ. Hence, implicit in Paul's irony is the "spiritual amnesia" of the Corinthians: they have momentarily forgotten the gospel preached by Paul, and they have lost sight of the foundation of their faith—Christ crucified. These three guiding questions also allude to the linear logic of salvation in Paul's writings: first, humanity was justified by God's grace made manifest in the crucifixion and death of Christ (Rom 3:21-25); second, through immersion into the waters of baptism and a symbolic participation in the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus, believers are reborn into life in Christ (Rom 6:3-4); third, when believers are reborn at baptism, they become a part of Christ's body through the ritual participation in the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 10:16-17). The described unity is not nominal or figurative, but is real and active (1 Cor 10:21-22). Hence, the existence of factions or rivalry groups in the *ekklēsia*, for Paul, is always a manifestation of a three-tier breakdown in ecclesial

[88] Ecclesial *Christification* means the community's transformation into Christ.

salvific consciousness: ignorance of the unifying power of Christ's body; forgetfulness of Christ's death; oblivion of the merits of rebirth in Christ.

Margaret M. Mitchell believes that 1 Cor 1:10 delineates political and social division within the *ekklēsia*. She claims that Paul's exhortations, especially the phrase *to auto legein*, connotes political allies, compatriots, and co-partisans.[89] This phrase was employed in "Greek literature to describe persons in a state of political or social unity from the classical period down well into the Greco-Roman era."[90] Paul's employment of this same phrase hints at the nature of the issue he was battling with: the division was a semblance of the political rivalry and social disunity found in the Greco-Roman polity. I will now examine the images evoked by the questions separately. The first question becomes more intelligible if it is read against the backdrop of a Pauline treatise regarding Christ's body.[91] Paul argues that Christ's body has been splintered into political factions or rival parties. The Greek reads: *Memeristai ho Christos*? *Merizō* denotes political divisions or groupings of political parties. Expanding this image, Raymond F. Collins opines that *merizō* was widely used in socio-political circles to delineate units of varied political persuasions. He claims that the political underpinning of *merizō* is evident in Paul's allusion to "Christ's body." Collins rephrases Paul's question to read: "Is the body of Christ (*ekklēsia*) splintered into political parties?"[92] Paul's allusion to divisions in the *ekklēsia* is corroborated by his Lord's Supper exhortation: "When you come together as a church (*ekklēsia*), I hear that there are divisions among you" (1 Cor 11:18). Paul,

[89] Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 68.

[90] Ibid., 70.

[91] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 35. Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians* Sacra Pagina 7, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999), 81; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 118.

[92] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 81.

most likely, was setting the stage for an admonition on the manifest divisions in the *ekklēsia*—especially at the Lord's Supper.

The *ekklēsia*, as the body of Christ bearing the *nous Christou*, should manifest unity. Divisions or factions obscure this integral quality of the *ekklēsia* (the *nous Christou*). The division being addressed is not merely divergence in views, but the existence of factions that threaten the church's witness (and perhaps existence). *Christos,* in the first question, is thus convertible with *ekklēsia*. Paul is furious because the *ekklēsia* is not allowing its behavior to be guided by a Spirit-inspired mindset (the *nous Christou*). Apart from this political angle, Paul is engaging his readers with another defining trait of the *ekklēsia*: unity. The statement that Paul's rhetorical question makes is "Christ is not divided." Paul upbraids the Corinthians for forgetting their "oneness" in Christ. This unity in Christ springs from the common justification of all through faith in Christ. This "common justification" is symbolically and ritually expressed in baptism. So Paul says in Gal 3:28, where he vividly describes the transforming effect of baptism: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." The unequivocal basis for the *ekklēsia*'s unity is the justification wrought in Christ: dying with Christ in order to rise with him to newness of life (Rom 6:4). The divisions present in the *ekklēsia* is a pathetic sign of an internal disorder, or forgetfulness, of the ground for ecclesial unity: the *nous Christou*.

Frank J. Matera, commenting on Gal 3:27-28, says that Paul berated all forms of segregation in the *ekklēsia* by identifying racial (Jews and Gentiles), social (slave and free), and gender (male and female) prejudices. He notes further that the transition from the plural "you are" (*este*) to the singular "one" (*heis*) indicates the new creation that emerges from being

in (or baptized into) Christ.[93] Factions thus indicate unawareness of this new creation in Christ. This "oneness" of being in Christ is the implicit solution to the inherent factions in the *ekklēsia*. It is elicited by the Spirit-inspired mindset which makes Christ concretely present in the *ekklēsia*. Paul, in stressing the horror of disunity, lambasts the *ekklēsia* for condescending to political partisanship and setting aside the supreme witness of Christ-believers: one body in Christ. This witness is springs from the *nous Christou*: The Spirit-inspired mindset that ontologically characterizes the *ekklēsia* as Christ's body.

The second rhetorical question reinforces the absence of the *nous Christou*. It also presumes a basic knowledge of the pith of Pauline Christology: Christ crucified is the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:23-24). Paul's theology revolves around the reality of the Paschal event. The *ekklēsia*, being Christ's body, bears the marks of the crucified Lord. The *nous Christou* which is the Spirit-inspired *nous* that is ontologically engraved on the *ekklēsia* supports and sustains this cruciform character. Paul alludes to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, because they are the foundation of justification for the *ekklēsia*: Jews and Gentiles. By alluding to Christ's death, Paul lucidly states his case: divisions in the *ekklēsia* obscure the reality of the Christ-event. This phenomenon blurs the Spirit-inspired *nous* that radiates from the *ekklēsia*. Paul calls the culprits "people of the flesh" and "unspiritual," because they lacked the knowledge of the crucified Lord—God's wisdom and power (1 Cor 3:1).[94] Using the word *eris* (quarrel), Paul connects the rhetorical questions of 1 Cor 1:13 to his negative evaluation in 1 Cor 3:3 (few verses after the *nous Christou*). The "people of the flesh" act out of natural

[93] Frank J. Matera, *Galatians* Sacra Pagina 9, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1992), 142-143.

[94] Paul holds that God's wisdom has been revealed by the Spirit to the spiritual ones (1 Cor 2:10). This wisdom of God, as Paul says elsewhere, is essentially the wisdom that springs from Christ crucified (1 Cor 1:24). The reception, or possession, of this Spirit enables the spiritual ones to discern the gifts of God's Spirit (1 Cor 2:12). Hence, to be "persons of the flesh" is tantamount to being deprived of the knowledge of God's power and wisdom; it denotes ignorance of Christ crucified and God's righteousness; it indicates unawareness of the gifts bestowed by God, which are designed for the building up of the church.

inclinations, and not in line with God's Spirit—the source of the *nous Christou*. Acting in accordance with God's Spirit is acting inspired by the *nous Christou*.

The third rhetorical question underscores the absence of the *nous Christou*. It evokes the theme of baptism: "Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" Baptism is linked to Christ's death as Paul claims: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death" (Rom 6:3)?[95] The reference to baptism logically follows the question on Christ's death, because baptism is the ritual death to the "old self" and rebirth in Christ (Rom 6:6). Through baptism, the Christ-believer enters newness of life with Christ (Rom 6:4). Paul also asserts that baptism is the cessation of slavery to sin (Rom 6:6). "Slavery to sin" is the same as adhering to the ways of "the flesh." The ways of "the flesh" is opposed to the ways of the Spirit who animates and inspires the *nous Christou* in the *ekklēsia*. Paul implies that the Corinthians' ignorance of the impact of baptism makes the existence of division possible. Paul is incensed at the Corinthians because they disregarded the gospel of Christ crucified and the significance of baptism: union with Christ (Rom 6:5). The rebirth emanating from being transformed in Christ is jettisoned when believers yield to quarreling, jealousy, and division (1 Cor 3:3). The Greek phrase Paul employs for baptism is insightful: *eis to onoma*… ("into the name…"). Paul regards baptism as a process through which the *ekklēsia* is firmly rooted in or enters into Christ.[96]

[95] I am going to cite copiously Paul's treatise on baptism in Romans, because there is no discussion on baptism in First Corinthians. However, an understanding of what Paul says about baptism in Romans (if Paul's thoughts are consistent) makes his allusions in Corinthians clearer. Besides, Romans presents Paul's most matured reflections on various theological themes

[96] Michael J. Gorman states that Paul, contrary to some recent scholarly interpretations, eschews realized eschatology or triumphalism. He writes: "What keeps Paul from going down that road … is his understanding of 'newness of life' as an ongoing state of being dead to sin … and therefore of sharing in the cross…." Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 369.

N. T. Wright reiterates this point: "Those who are baptized have entered into the community of those for whom this [the resurrection and freedom from the Adamic self] was true, and can be 'reckoned' as true, not by a supreme effort of moral will but by calculating what is in fact the case…."[97] Through baptism, Wright writes, the *ekklēsia* is immersed into Christ. The phrase "in Christ," Wright opines, means to belong to the "people of the Messiah" or to be the "eschatological people of the covenant God."[98] Little wonder, the verb *ebaptisthēte* (were baptized) is plural in form. Paul pokes at the *ekklēsia*'s intrinsic identity as Christ's body, and, most important, as having the *nous Christou*. The presence of divisions is consequently a privation of the *ekklēsia*'s *nous Christou*. Michael J. Gorman proffers an explanation that links Paul's three rhetorical questions together. He holds that Paul's description of "baptism into Christ" is synonymous with his description of "faith in Christ" and "justification by faith."[99] Paul's three rhetorical questions, according to Gorman's argument, have one idea in view: dying (sharing in the crucifixion) and rising to newness of life with Christ (sharing in the resurrection). Paul's disappointment with the Corinthians' conduct prods at their resuscitation of the old (Adamic) self. For Gorman, justification is "an experience of dying and rising."[100] To indulge in activities characteristic of the old self is to downplay the *ekklēsia*'s rebirth in Christ. Brendan Byrne, explicating Paul's theology of baptism, says: "Behind the expression ['in Christ'] lies the characteristic Pauline idea of the risen Lord as personally constituting a sphere of influence or milieu of salvation 'into' which believers are drawn…."[101] This sphere

[97] N. T. Wright, "Romans and the Theology of Paul," in *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul, 1978-2013* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 109.

[98] Ibid., 109. Søren Agersnap also argues that the phrase "in Christ," like many other Pauline terminologies, indicates the believers' intimate link to Christ. Agersnap, *Baptism and the New Life: A Study of Romans 6:1-14* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1999), 133.

[99] Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 369.

[100] Ibid., 369.

[101] Brendan Byrne, *Romans* Sacra Pagina 6 (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1996), 190.

of influence enables the risen Lord to mystically contain "the messianic community destined for salvation" within himself.[102]

Byrne insists that it is the *ekklēsia* that is contained in Christ, not just individuals. Thus through baptism, the risen Lord creates a new people of God, who are *ipso facto* marked by the *nous Christou*. Paul reiterates this point in his question: "Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" This mystical "sphere of influence" into which the group is assimilated is comparable to the *ekklēsia*. By "containing" the *ekklēsia* within himself (using Byrne's words), Christ, through the Spirit, marks it with his *nous*: the *nous Christou*. So, through baptism (rebirth in Christ), the *ekklēsia* does not just become Christ's body, but it is ontologically marked by the *nous Christou*.[103] Sang-Won Son asserts that baptism effects a corporate transformation in a people's existence and their solidarity with Christ. He writes: "Being in Christ must be … the state resulting from baptism into Christ, that is, the believer's participation in the death and the resurrection of Christ."[104] In addition to this, he says that it induces "solidarity with Christ."[105] Son argues that "solidarity with Christ" means "putting on Christ." The *ekklēsia*'s participation, solidarity, and the "putting on" of Christ is comparable to having the *nous Christou*. In line with my earlier-established Pauline response formula, I will now discuss Paul's analogy and solution to the problem of division.

Paul employs two analogies to tackle divisions in the church: agriculture and building. These analogies portray an *ekklēsia* that has the *nous Christou*. They also remotely allude to the *nous Christou*, because they are anchored in the idea of the *ekklēsia* as God's possession.

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[102] Ibid., 190.

[103] Although Paul does not make these connections directly, they must be related given his independent description of baptism and the *nous Christou*.

[104] Sang-Won Son, *Corporate Elements in Pauline Anthropology: A Study of Selected Terms, Idioms, and Concepts in the Light of Paul's Usage and Background* Analecta Biblica: Investigationes Scientificae in Res Biblicas (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2001), 29.

[105] Ibid., 29.

By belonging to God, the *ekklēsia* manifests the power of God's Spirit to bring about unity from diversity. This mindset that suppresses selfish tendencies, fosters unity, and downplays divisions flows from the ontological character of the *ekklēsia*: the *nous Christou*. Using the image of agriculture, Paul describes the role of disciples as that of God's servants, who participate in God's project. The one who gives increase is the most important actor on the stage (1 Cor 3:6). By referring to himself as the one who planted and Apollos as the one who watered, Paul insinuates that he founded the *ekklēsia* at Corinth. He admits too that Apollos contributed to the Corinthian church's growth; thus, he and Apollos have a common purpose. The Greek puts it vividly: *hen eisin* (they are one). Paul emphasizes their unity of purpose by criticizing the divisions anchored on special affinities to either of them. Paul foregrounds this argument by referring to Apollos and himself as *synergoi* ("coworkers"). Collins says that work is a metaphor for the ministry of evangelization in Paul. Hence, to be a coworker is to share in this ministry of evangelization and the formation of communities.[106] On the one hand, Paul admits his role in founding the church; on the other hand, he commends Apollos for his selfless service in ministering to the nascent church. Paul's use of *theou* (God's) prods at the crux of the community's altercation: the Corinthians are not *Paulou* (Paul's) or *Apollō* (Apollo's), but God's field and building (1 Cor 3:9). Paul restates this when he cautions the *ekklēsia* against boasting about human leaders (1 Cor 3:21). He repeats his conviction of God's ownership of the *ekklēsia*: "Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas … all belong to you [the Corinthians], and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God" (1 Cor 3:22). Paul rebukes the tendency to attribute the *ekklēsia*'s growth to human agency.

Paul continues his depiction of an *ekklēsia* possessing the *nous Christou* by using a building metaphor. His analysis reiterates his role in founding the church, and Apollos's role in ministering to it in his absence (1 Cor 3:10). Paul's claims can be concisely stated: first, he

[106] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 146-147.

founded the church; second, the foundation he laid is Christ Jesus (1 Cor 3:11); third, someone seems to have built with fancy words or showy rhetoric; lastly, Paul believes that time vindicates the quality and solidity of each builder's work (1 Cor 3:13-15). He offers his verdict on a working model of the *ekklēsia*: "You are God's temple and God's Spirit dwells in you" (1 Cor 3:16). Paul's claim makes two bold affirmations: first, the *ekklēsia* is God's building; second, it is the Spirit's project. The first part reaffirms Paul's stance that every missionary activity is God's design and not that of the apostle. The second part exhumes Paul's statement: "We have the mind of Christ." Deeply embedded in this saying is the Spirit's role in transforming the *ekklēsia* into Christ's body. Since Paul's reference is to the unity of the *ekklēsia* and its identity as a part of Christ's body, its ontological character—the *nous Christou*—is implied. Next, I shall discuss the case of sexual immorality and how it manifests a lack of the *nous Christou*.

Sexual Immorality in First Corinthians

In 1 Cor 5:1, Paul rebukes the *ekklēsia* for condoning sexual immorality (*porneia*). This phenomenon starkly shows the privation of the *nous Christou*. The text reads: "For a man is living with his father's wife (*gunaika tina tou patros echein*)."[107] The phenomenon described in this passage is incest: a man having sexual relations with his stepmother. Paul is enraged by the *ekklēsia*'s arrogance toward the incestuous relationship.[108] An earlier Jewish prohibition of the sexual immorality is reported in Lev 18:8: "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is the nakedness of your father." The emphasis of the law is on the humiliation

[107] The Greek phrase literally means "one's father's wife (or woman)" and is a figurative expression for one's stepmother.

[108] Gordon D. Fee says that the cause of the church's arrogance is unclear (not explicit in the letter): whether the community is tolerant toward the act or spuriously considers it to be a manifestation of spiritual freedom. See Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 214.

of one's father. Collins notes that this sexual prohibition was also found in the Roman law.[109] Paul says that this sexual aberration is not even found among pagans, an obvious reference to a wider legal prohibition of such acts. Paul's response to the erring ones follows the already-established pattern: complaint (1 Cor 5:1-2), explanation and analogy (1 Cor 5:6-8), and verdict (1 Cor 5:9-13). It reveals a *nous Christou*-informed decision: a judgment based on the *ekklēsia*'s ontological connection to Christ through the Spirit. Paul stresses the impact of this scandal on the *ekklēsia*. His concern in harboring such scandalous behavior is its effect on the *ekklēsia*'s ultimate witness: "Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough" (1 Cor 5:6). This is also the analogy Paul employs to get around the problem. This statement implies that the immoral actions of an individual, if not tamed, can hurt the *ekklēsia*. What is at stake here is the *ekklēsia*'s nature: the *nous Christou*. Put succinctly, Paul is perturbed that the *nous Christou* is being enveloped by a scandalous act. Gorman reiterates this: "The man's behavior is a betrayal of his identity in Christ."[110] He goes on to remark that removing this man from the "sphere of the Lord Jesus" and handing him over to Satan will instigate his conversion.[111] Albeit Gorman does not use *nous Christou*, the phrases he employs—"identity in Christ" and "sphere of the Lord Jesus"—imply the *nous Christou*. "Identity in Christ" and the "sphere of Christ" are both parallel to the *ekklēsia* and are the locus of the *nous Christou*.

The apt framework for unearthing Paul's appeal is his idea of the *ekklēsia*: the body of Christ. This conviction is uppermost in his mind when he says: "Let us celebrate the festival [the Passover] … with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor 5:8). Aiding and abetting an incestuous relationship in the *ekklēsia* indicate insincerity and deceit. They also manifest a blatant disregard for the *ekklēsia* as the locus of the *nous Christou*. Paul insists that

[109] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 209-210.
[110] Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 247.
[111] Ibid., 247.

the real danger is not the immoral pagan, but the immoral believer (1 Cor 5:9-11). Immoral believers pose a greater threat to the *ekklēsia*'s identity as the concrete expression of the *nous Christou*. Paul also perceives the *ekklēsia*'s condoning of this act to be a return to a "fleshy" mindset (1 Cor 5:8). He exhorts the *ekklēsia* to act sincerely and truthfully. This implies that the covering up of such licentious acts is both deceitful and malicious, since it lethally infects the *ekklēsia*'s image and identity. Paul's solution in this situation is expulsion: "Drive out the wicked person from among you" (1 Cor 5:13). His verdict addresses two issues: the *ekklēsia* and the individual's salvation (1 Cor 5:5, 11). The *ekklēsia* is critically important, because it is the locus of the *nous Christou*; the individual's salvation is equally important since it is a participation in the *ekklēsia*'s nature.

Paul chooses *pentheō* as the fitting comportment of the *ekklēsia* toward the loathsome action. *Pentheō* is used to describe intense grief for a deceased friend or relative (Mark 16:10), or for profound affliction and pain (Matt 5:4, 9:15). In this context, Paul probably intends both meanings: grief for the straying intransigent member of the *ekklēsia*, and wailing for a horrendous act perpetrated in Christ's body.[112] Both meanings are corroborated by Paul's sanction—expulsion from the *ekklēsia* (separation from being "in Christ"), which symbolize death and disease. Paul's verdict on this matter evinces his understanding of the holistic impact of this act on the *ekklēsia*: it extinguishes the church's torch of "new life" and infects the assembly with an appalling mindset. In line with this twofold meaning of *pentheō*, Paul uses the analogy of the Passover meal: Paschal lamb and unleavened bread.

The Passover meal reenacts the critical events that culminated in Pharaoh's expulsion of the Israelites. Among the various food items served, the Paschal lamb and the unleavened

[112] Fitzmyer opines that both readings are possible but that he is more inclined to the second: "…But more likely the reason for mourning should be shame at the tolerance of such evil among them and the realization that they as a community are corporately responsible." Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* Anchor Yale Bible 32 (New Haven: Yale University, 2008), 235.

bread are the most significant. The roasted lamb reminds the Israelites of God's protection, especially on the night when the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain (Exod 11:5). God's protection is recounted at each festival through the imposition of the lamb's blood on the doorposts and lintel (Exod 12:7). The unleavened bread recalls the haste that characterized Israel's departure from Egypt (Exod 12:33-34).[113] Paul, mindful of these Passover images of communal protection and haste, employs this analogy in berating the *ekklēsia*. He considers this maleficence to be a threat to the communal protection that the *ekklēsia* enjoys from being "in Christ" and being ontologically marked by the *nous Christou*. He recommends the errant one's speedy expulsion from the fold.[114] The haste with which the straying member is to be expelled is reminiscent of the hasty expulsion of the Israelites by Pharaoh. The urgency of the sojourn of the Israelites was characterized by a recommended posture and attire for the meal: loins girded (like a sojourner) and standing. Paul's interpretation of this tradition is slightly different. He refers to Christ as the new Paschal lamb and says that the *ekklēsia* is an unleavened bread which must never be leavened by the yeast of malice and evil. Paul's emphasis is on Christ's sacrifice (his death and resurrection) and on the imminent danger of leaving the lewd deed unattended (1 Cor 5:7). For Jews, the Passover elicited God's care and protection over the chosen people and the haste with which they fled from the land of Egypt; in Paul's exegesis, the new Passover is the Christ-event and the unleavened bread is the

[113] Paul's use of leaven is not merely alluding to its function in baking, but to the Jewish scrupulosity regarding leaven in households, especially at Passovers. Paul is thus likening the thoroughness of searching for leaven to the desired thoroughness with which the *ekklēsia* should search out scandalous acts and relationship. Given this analogy, Paul is ipso facto saying the culprit should be distanced from the *ekklēsia* as far as possible. Kitzur Shulhan Arukh, describing how meticulous the leaven search ought to be says: "All the rooms into which leaven might have lodged, must be searched; even the cellars, garrets, and woodsheds." Arukh, *Code of Jewish Law: A Compilation of Jewish Laws and Customs by Rabbi Solomon Ganzfried*, trans. by Hyman E. Goldin (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1993), chap. 111, no. 3.

[114] Elsewhere Arukh says: "Every nook and cranny of all places must be searched with the utmost care. We must also search the pockets of our garments as well as those of our children's garments…." Ibid., chap. 111, no. 5.

ekklēsia. The *ekklēsia* is the locus for the Christ-event. This reading of the Passover evokes the *nous Christou*. Since the new Pasch is reenacted in the *ekklēsia*, all its decisions must always bear the marks of the crucified and risen Lord to whom it is inextricably bound.

The *ekklēsia*'s arrogance (*phusioō*) is another source of worry. Elsewhere Paul uses this verb to signify being "puffed up" by one's knowledge, contrasting it with love and the building up of the *ekklēsia*. For instance, Paul says: "Knowledge puffs up (*phusioō*), but love builds up" (1 Cor 8:1). He also writes: "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant" (1 Cor 13:4). Arrogance in these passages always excludes love and the building up of the *ekklēsia*. When Paul upbraids the *ekklēsia* for tolerating *porneia*, his fury is directed at the menace that this act poses: it will tear down the *ekklēsia*'s values and obscure the Christ-like mindset that enables it to act in love.

Commenting on the deceit couched in the *ekklēsia*'s negligence and the menace posed by the *ekklēsia*'s nonchalance, James D. G. Dunn says: "To leave such conduct uncondemned invites a general corruption of standards…. One diseased member might well spread disease throughout the body; the spiritual health of the community as a whole was at stake…."[115] Dunn observes that the *ekklēsia*'s welfare (the *nous Christou*) was Paul's principal concern. He also alleges that Paul might have overemphasized the church's shortcoming in covering up the recalcitrant member, because a high-profile person was the offender.[116] He insists that the anonymity of the perpetrator gives credence to this belief. Harboring a scandalous relationship, Dunn argues, spiritually infects and hurts Christ's body. Fee believes that Paul's actual worry is not only the church's tolerance of the act, but its rationalization of a vile deed: "The problem … is not simply a relaxed attitude toward this sin, but whether they also tried to give a

[115] James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul The Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 691.

[116] Ibid., 691.

theological basis for it and thereby to condone it."[117] The defense of immoral behavior, Fee writes, compromises the identity of the *ekklēsia* as the temple of the Spirit and a possessor of the *nous Christou* (by implication).[118]

The logic of Paul's presentation further sheds light on how to interpret his arguments. Paul gives his reason first and then draws his conclusion: "For (*gar*) our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed (premise)"; "therefore (*hōste*), let us celebrate the festival … with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (conclusion)." Paul's use of the passive for Christ's death is very insightful: "…Has been sacrificed (*etuthē*)." This is clearly a divine passive. But God is only the agent, and not the beneficiary for whom the lamb was slain. The beneficiary for Paul is the *ekklēsia*, and that is why he refers to it as Christ's body. Paul also presupposes another layer of connection in this analogy: since the celebration of Passover demands both the Paschal lamb and the unleavened bread, the living sacrifice pleasing to God requires the *ekklēsia* to be inextricably linked and bound to Christ. This dependence on Christ flows from the *nous Christou*. Longenecker aptly articulates this: "It [*nous*] is a complete inner change of thought, will, and desires that Christians are to allow God by means of the ministry of his Holy Spirit to bring about in their lives, resulting in a recognizable external change of actions and conduct."[119] His renewal of the *nous* has four features: the inner self, the Spirit, behavior and *ekklēsia*. But they are inversely stated: the Spirit, *ekklēsia*, inner self, and behavior.

Peter Richardson corroborates this reading. He says that Paul's decision is prompted by an understanding of the *ekklēsia* as "the effective form of the people of God."[120] In Paul's admonition, Richardson finds a harmonization of an old traditional understanding of justice

[117] Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians,* 215.

[118] Ibid., 216.

[119] Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 923.

[120] Peter Richardson, "Judgment in Sexual Matters in 1 Corinthians 6:1-11," *Novum Testamentum 25*, no. 1 (1983): 57.

and a new notion of the *ekklēsia* as a school of saints. Paul's action was not only directed at the misdemeanor, but at the protection of the *ekklēsia*'s intrinsic trait: the *nous Christou*. He imposes a harsh and dispassionate sanction on the incontinent member, because the *ekklēsia* is the foreshadowing of the *eschaton*. As such, Richardson holds that in Pauline morality "judgment and eschatology go hand in hand."[121] This means that the way an *ekklēsia* manages its problems determines its readiness for the parousia. Following Richardson, the *nous Christou* is also an eschatological quality. The *ekklēsia*'s disapproval of immorality is also a hallmark of its being "citizens of heaven" (Phil 3:20). I will now examine Paul's verdict on food offered to idols.

Food Offered to Idols

Paul resolution of food offered to idols implies the *nous Christou*. Schematically, his argument reads: problem (1 Cor 8:1), explanation (1 Cor 8:2-11; 10:23-30), analogy (1 Cor 8:12; 10:16-17), and verdict (1 Cor 8:13; 10:14). The main problem that Paul identifies is being puffed up (*phusioō*) about knowledge (*gnōsis*)— a privation of the *nous Christou*. In his treatise on sexual immorality, being puffed up is partly the problem: "You are arrogant (*pephusiōmenoi*)" (1 Cor 5:2)! This arrogance is fueled by a subtle form of pervasive liberty (1 Cor 8:9). Walter Schmithals traces this liberty to a world dominated by Gnosticism.[122] For Schmithals, this liberty cuts across all the problems: participation in pagan sacrificial rites, licentiousness, indiscipline at the Lord's Supper, and skepticism regarding the resurrection.[123]

[121] Richardson, "Judgment in Sexual Matters," 57.

[122] The *gnōs*-stem was used twenty-six times in the undisputed letters of Paul. Nineteen of those occurrences appear in Paul's to the Corinthians: twelve in First Corinthians and seven in Second Corinthians. This means that the Corinthian problem was evidently intertwined with *gnōsis*.

[123] Although modern Pauline scholarship vehemently disagrees with Walter Schmithals' claims, I am presenting his views here to offer a multifaceted reading to Paul's response. He also does a great job in providing the social context for Paul's fears; albeit it is

Schmithals also notes that there is a potent danger in wholeheartedly endorsing food offered to idols. Although the liberals argue that eating meat sacrificed to cult deities is harmless, the danger is that such views can lead to paganism.[124] Schmithals observes: "…Sacred meals preceded by a sacrifice were widespread … in the New Testament times…. Their original meaning is that the individual enters into substantial connection with the cult's god."[125] The rite that accompanies the eating of meat is not spoken of in the report brought to Paul. Yet, as Schmithals opines, syncretism was a real threat. The other factor that Schmithals highlights is the arrogance of the liberals. They indulge in controversial issues just to prove a point: the demeaning of corporeality and the exaltation of the immateriality. Describing the motivation of the liberals, Schmithals writes: "It is … typically Gnostic to participate in pagan cultic meals from a deliberately 'Christian' stance. The demons have indeed been conquered. This needs to be demonstrated."[126] The liberals are goaded by the quest of testing boundaries; they want to prove that the flesh has been overcome. Their indifference, Schmithals notes, is not only directed at food offered to idols, but extends to wild pleasures: watching the gladiators battle wild beasts and other lewd pleasures.[127]

Derek Newton disagrees with Schmithals' reading (and I completely agree). He says that although there are tendencies in First Corinthians that are comparable to Gnosticism, one cannot assume that Paul was addressing the full-blown movement of Gnosticism.[128] Newton also argues that there is no consistency in Paul's use of *gnōsis*, because the term appears first

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not Gnostic. Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 225.

[124] This is Paul's argument as well (1 Cor 10:23-24).

[125] Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*, 225. He also remarks that this understanding of sacred meals underlies Paul's description of the Lord's Supper and his arguments against its abuse.

[126] Ibid., 226.

[127] Ibid., 226.

[128] Derek Newton, *Deity and Diet: The Dilemma of Sacrificial Food at Corinth* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 273-274.

without a definite article (1 Cor 8:1), then with one a bit later (1 Cor 8:7). He insinuates that if Paul is referring to full-blown Gnosticism, the term would always be preceded by a definite article.[129] Albeit I agree with Newton's critique of Schmithals, my reasons for differing are much more. Paul's use of *gnōsis* is not a direct reference to Gnosticism, but to the "puffed up" (and seemingly knowledgeable) members. There are vestiges of Paul's repudiation of the "puffed up" members in his speech on division and sexual immorality. The "knowledge" that Paul condemns here, though different from *sophia*, essentially refers to a mindset that is self-centered and self-serving. Paul's berating of the wise is a critique of decisions not inspired by the *nous Christou*. Those who are "puffed up" disregard the *ekklēsia*'s welfare by leading the vulnerable members astray, thus obscuring its ontological trait.

Paul's stance on food offered to idols is also connected to his argument on division. This is most evident from his use of building terminology (*oikodomei*). Regarding division, Paul calls the *ekklēsia* God's building (1 Cor 3:9); the apostles are builders (1 Cor 3:10-15); and the people are the temple where the Spirit dwells (*oikei*). Pertaining to food offered to idols, Paul says that "knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" and that "'all things are lawful,' but not all things build up." The link between both passages is the *ekklēsia*, the abode of the *nous Christou*. Paul's worry about a divided church is the loss of a common identity—being in Christ. Likewise in the case of food offered to idols, his concern is the group's welfare (1 Cor 10:28). Paul's moral compass asks: Does the act affect common life? Does it hurt the *ekklēsia*'s reflection of the *nous Christou*? Wendell Lee Willis aptly sums up Paul's concern: "…The basic principle for conduct set forth in [1 Cor] 10:24 is drawn from the character of Christian love … modeled upon the normative work of Christ … and seen in the life of Paul himself…."[130] Willis's conclusion introduces another element into Paul's consideration: love

[129] Ibid., 274.

[130] Wendell Lee Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* Society of Biblical Literature 68 (Chico: Scholars, 1985), 228.

(*agapē*). *Agapē* and *oikeō* connect Paul's treatise on food offered to idols to the spiritual gifts. These terms prominently feature in Paul's excursus on the spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12-14). Love builds up; hence, it is a crucial factor for the Pauline community. Love is the right disposition for understanding the *nous Christou*'s task in the *ekklēsia*. It is often contrasted with being "puffed up" which is self-seeking and self-serving.

Raymond F. Collins remarks that Paul flays the "puffed up" members' insensitivity using brother-sister language (*adelphos*): "The repeated use of kinship language underscores the egregiousness of the behavior of those in the know. They sin against the members of their own family."[131] This tallies with Paul's incessant reminder: "Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the others" (1 Cor 10:24). Paul's concern for the neophyte's faith, the welfare of a sibling in Christ, and the building up of the *ekklēsia*, as the embodiment of the *nous Christou* is central to his admonition. His stance on participating in sacrificial meals is characterized by a single goal: consideration for the *ekklēsia*. Because the church is the locus of the *nous Christou*, Paul believes *ekklēsia*'s decisions must radiate it. Next, I will treat the abuses at the Lord's Supper.

Abuses at the Lord's Supper

Paul's response formula applies to the exhortation regarding the Lord's Supper. The narrative distinctly features a problem (1 Cor 11:18, 21), an analogy (1 Cor 11:23-26), and a solution (1 Cor 11:33). Paul's explanation cuts across the entire pericope. It prioritizes the *ekklēsia*'s welfare and upholds a mindset that conforms to being "in Christ" and proclaiming Christ crucified. Paul's admonition is anchored in the *ekklēsia*'s identity as the embodiment of the *nous Christou*. It also acknowledges the overlooking of the *ekklēsia*'s call to make Christ

[131] The "knowledgeable" members are those "puffed up" by their arrogance and insensitivity for others in the community. Collins, *First Corinthians*.

concretely present by acting in a way that is inspired by the *nous Christou*. I shall now discuss the problem at Corinth. Paul's diagnosis of the situation at Corinth reads: "… I hear that there are divisions (*schismata*) among you…. When the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk" (1 Cor 11:18, 21). This quote unearths two problems in the celebration of the Lord's Supper: division and insensitivity. The latter begets the former: some persons were only interested in members of their clique and disdained (or were indifferent to) the rest of the group. Both factors betray the *ekklēsia*'s role as the embodiment of the *nous Christou*. Paul's disappointment is reminiscent of his earlier question: Has (the body of) Christ been divided? Albeit the latter uses *merizō*, Paul's worry is basically the same: the creation of factions threatens ecclesial unity. *Merizō* has a political connotation, while *schisma* evinces a social stratification. In both cases, Paul's vision of Christ's body was in jeopardy. Thus Paul's main critique of the Corinthians is that they have allowed factions to split the *ekklēsia*. In addition to *schisma*, Paul denounces the existence of *haireseis* (factions) in the *ekklēsia*.[132]

Panayotis Coutsoumpos identifies two parts of the Lord's Supper in the first century: a collective meal and the Eucharistic meal.[133] He claims that the abuse of the Lord's Supper pertains to the former: the wealthy ones were having a private, earlier meal with their friends (or those of the same social status) before the arrival of the less privileged (poor) members. The poor members, when they arrive, are expected to eat in the courtyard. Dunn strikes the same cord. He says that the Lord's Supper in First Corinthians shares much in common with the Greco-Roman dinner: there is a "first table" and a "second table." The latter was served

[132] *Hairesis* is a technical word for a party or a sect. In secular Greek usage, it often refers to a political party or a social group. Paul uses the plural to show that the church has been reduced to political parties.

[133] Panayotis Coutsoumpos, *Paul and the Lord's Supper: A Socio-Historical Investigation* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 104.

alongside a "symposium" (a drinking party).[134] The symposium is most likely responsible for the drunkenness. Such Greco-Roman dinners feature people from the same or commensurate social class. Gorman postulates an identical scenario: "… The poorer latecomers are forced to eat separately from the wealthier members … and to scrounge for leftovers."[135] Paul rhetorically alludes to this: "Do you not have homes to eat and drink in" (1 Cor 11:22)? The abuses thus are due to the social stratification of the *ekklēsia* and the lack of concern for the economically impoverished ones. Collins adduces reasons for the stratification of the *ekklēsia*: "…The Christian community was not socially homogeneous. It consisted of men and women, slaves and free, Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor." This motley of some parts of the *ekklēsia* incited the division at Corinth. This shows that the *ekklēsia* was stratified along many lines: gender, social, ethnic, and economic. Divisions in the *ekklēsia* evince a lack of the *nous Christou*. The *ekklēsia*, as the embodiment of the *nous Christou*, must eradicate every form of division, and celebrate the Lord's Supper as one.

Although scholars agree that the Greco-Roman dinner is (in whole or part) parallel to that of the Lord's Supper, there are noticeable areas of divergence. For instance, Dunn says that Paul intended a single meal, and not several courses. He writes: "The practice, he [Paul] rebukes, is not that of a meal separate from the Lord's Supper, but the abuse of a single meal … which began with the one bread and ended with the cup…."[136] Dunn's remark is based on Paul's analogy of the one bread and the one cup (1 Cor 11:23-26). His explanation favors a single meal, which is large enough to make its participants full and drunk. The problem with this reading is that it presumes Paul was describing a practice. But Paul was only using a

[134] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul The Apostle*, 611; Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 266-267.

[135] Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, 268.

[136] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul The Apostle*, 610.

formula that is equally found in the Synoptic Gospels.[137] Paul's leitmotif was to emphasize the theological significance of the celebration: commemorative participation in the Lord's death (1 Cor 11:26). Thus, Paul's analogy is not a sufficient ground to speak of a single meal, because he was only concerned about the particular meal abused: the Lord's Supper.

The Gospel of Luke hints at multiple meals: a cup was offered first, thereafter a loaf of bread was accompanied by another cup (Luke 22:17, 19-20). Luke's presentation of the Last Supper differs from the other Synoptic Gospels and is probably in agreement with the Greco-Roman tradition. Luke Timothy Johnson opines that Luke's account of the Lord's Supper is closer to secular practice. He says that the variety found in the other Synoptic Gospels might have been attempts by scribes to edit the account in Luke: "The shorter versions [of the blessing over the cup] … testify by their variety to the attempts by scribes to 'correct' Luke, either by eliminating the first blessing over the cup or the second, or inverting the order so that the sequence better matches that of Mark and Matthew."[138] Despite the diversity in the number of meals shared, there is a remarkable agreement on the significance Paul imputes into (or derives from) the Lord's Supper. This significance envelops the *nous Christou*'s relevance to Paul's exhortation.

Gorman spotlights three items: solidarity (*koinōnia*), remembrance (*anamnesis*), and proclamation.[139] These elements that delineate the Lord's Supper indicate the *nous Christou*: the ontological mark of the *ekklēsia*. Paul explicitly mentions two of Gorman's points: *anamnēsis* (remembrance) and *kataggeleō* (to proclaim). Both appear in the Synoptic Gospels.

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[137] Matt 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, and Luke 22:19-20. These accounts share a striking number of common vocabulary: *arton* (a loaf of bread), *eucharistēsas* (he gave thanks), *labōn* (he took), *eklasen* (he broke), *edōken* (he gave), *sōma* (body), *aima* (blood), and *potērion* (cup). Note: Luke's Gospel favors the two-meal theory (Luke 22:17).

[138] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* Sacra Pagina, edited by Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1991), 337.

[139] Michael Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 267.

Paul implies the other factors—*koinōnia* and *eulogeō* (to bless)—in his explanation. In 1 Cor 11:26, he defends the celebration's symbol of solidarity and remembrance: "For as often as you (plural) eat this bread (singular) and drink the cup (singular), you (plural) proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." The Lord's Supper symbolically effects unity in the *ekklēsia*. Gorman aptly expresses this unity: "Paul believes the 'real presence' of Jesus in this meal is in the members of his body; Christ and church (=people) are inseparable for him."[140] Gorman hints at the *nous Christou* in several ways: first, he speaks of Christ's real presence in the *ekklēsia*; second, he says that Christ and *ekklēsia* are inseparably bound. Paul foregrounds the role of *anamnesis* in the Lord's Supper. Recalling is not just thinking, but also a communal participation in proclaiming the Lord's death in anticipation of the coming glory. Gorman beautifully recapitulates this: "It [remembrance] meant faithfully responding to God and God's past saving actions, which are made present and effective once again in the act of faithful remembrance."[141] Hence, a befitting celebration of the Lord's Supper must showcase the *ekklēsia* as being ontologically marked by the *nous Christou*.

Spiritual Gifts

Paul marks the introduction of his treatise on spiritual gifts with the phrase *peri de tōn pneumatikōn* ("but concerning spiritual things"). *Tōn pneumatikōn* is used substantively. It can denote a host of spiritual realities: persons, things, and gifts. But in this context, it refers to the *phanerōsis tou pneumatos* ("manifestation of the Spirit"). This "manifestation" of the Spirit is meant for the building up of the *ekklēsia* and not for self-aggrandizement. However, a case can be made for alternative readings like "spiritual persons" and "spiritually-gifted persons," since Paul wanted to dispel the ignorance of such persons in the *ekklēsia*: *ou thelō humas agnoein*

[140] Ibid., 268-269.
[141] Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord,* 269.

("I do not want you to be uninformed").[142] Paul's allusion to the pagan background of these persons shows that the confusion regarding these "manifestations of the Spirit" was due to the extant pagan allegiance of these converts. Paul says: "Therefore, I reveal (*gnōrizō*) to you that no one can say 'Lord Jesus' unless (he/she is inspired) by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3—au. trans.). Paul concludes with *dio* which ushers in an adverbial clause of reason.

Paul's remark can be simplified further: no one can witness to Christ unless inspired by the Holy Spirit. Two things emerge from Paul's synopsis: first, the manifestations of the Spirit are invitations to witness to Christ; second, the Spirit inspires all genuine acts of witnessing. Paul's claims evoke the *nous Christou*: the Spirit and Christ's concrete presence in the *ekklēsia*. Paul's employment of *gnōrizō* (to reveal) in describing his project is insightful. In the NT, *gnōrizō* is used in revelatory contexts. In Acts 7:13, Joseph discloses (*gnōrizō*) his identity to his brothers who previously knew him by a different name and in a different capacity. In Rom 16:26, the mystery of salvation that had been kept secret for many ages is revealed (*gnōrizō*). Both passages presume the following: first, the things revealed were disguised in the past; second, revelation is the unveiling of things obscured in the past. In both cases, newness refers to the subject's perception and not to the object. If we transpose this understanding of *gnōrizō* to Paul's treatise on the spiritual gifts, the following is deduced: first, Paul was not identifying more spiritual gifts (object); second, Paul was unveiling the right notion of spiritual gifts that the Corinthians were already acquainted with (subject). Paul's summary of the fundamental issues pertaining to the spiritual gifts paves the way for its investigation. His treatise presumes the *nous Christou* with a special focus on Spirit-inspired and *ekklēsia*. Paul's overriding principle is that the spiritual gifts are given for the building up of the *ekklēsia*. He uses the

[142] Ekem and Kuwornu-Adjaottor argue for "spiritual persons" and "spiritually-gifted persons" respectively. John D. Ekem, "'Spiritual Gifts' or 'Spiritual Persons'? 1 Corinthians 12:1A Revisited," *Neotestamentica 38*, no.1 (Jan. 2004): 72; and Jonathan E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, "Spiritual Gifts, Spiritual Persons, and Spiritually-Gifted Persons," *Neotestamentica 46*, no. 2 (Jan. 2012): 271.

metaphor of the human body to clarify this. I will now examine Paul's explanation on the meaning and purpose of the spiritual gifts.

The operative word in Paul's elucidation on spiritual gifts is *diairesis* ("variety").[143] This term derives from the same root as another word that Paul criticized in his earlier response on the abuses of the Lord's Supper: *hairesis* ("sect"). Both words are homophones. Paul initial Greek-speaking audience must have perceived his subtle connection in using like-sounding words. Paul implicitly plays on these words: *diairesis* is the diversity sown into the assembly by the Spirit to elicit unity from multiplicity; *hairesis* is the division orchestrated by "people of the flesh" and engenders disunity and acrimony in the *ekklēsia*. The former makes many one, while the latter makes one many. Paul names three things bestowed by the Spirit: *charismatōn* (gifts), *diaconiōn* (ministries), and *energēmatōn* (works). These items are not specific gifts, but the hermeneutical framework for understanding the spiritual gifts. This becomes evident when the root meanings of these words are examined: *charisma* (grace), *diakonia* (service), and *energē* (work). Although Paul does not dwell further on these root meanings, he presumes that his readers are well acquainted with his stance on them. For instance, in Rom 3:24, he describes humanity's justification in Christ as a *charisma* (gift), because Jews and Gentiles were redeemed not by works of the law or the knowledge of right living, but by the redemptive death of Christ. In describing spiritual gifts as service and work, Paul wants the *ekklēsia* to have the right mindset in exercising these gifts: they are meant for service and the building up of the *ekklēsia*, and not for personal aggrandizement or the creation of classes or divisions. Collins sums this up: "The exercise of the gifts … is the way in which each Christian serves [the] one and the same Lord…. These gifts are the means by which God

[143] *Diairesis* occurs three times in three verses: 1 Cor 12:4-6.

acts within the community."[144] The recognition of the need to serve while using the gifts is deeply rooted in the *ekklēsia*'s ontological character: the *nous Christou*.

After mentioning *diairesis* three times and listing three spiritual categories (*charisma*, *diakonia*, and *energē*), Paul adduces three reasons why this diversity of spiritual gifts fosters ecclesial unity: *to auto pneuma*, *ho autos kurios*, and *ho autos theos* ("the same Spirit," "the same Lord," and "the same God").[145] For Paul, the diversity in the *ekklēsia* has its origin in God: one God, one Lord, and one Spirit (the source of the *nous Christou*). The unity of divine action nurtures a diversity of gifts that serves the furtherance of gospel. Paul's enumeration of these gifts appears complementary: *logos sophias* (wisdom) and *logos gnōseōs* (knowledge); *pistis* (faith) and *charismata iamatōn* (gifts of healing); *energēmata dunameōn* (mighty works) and *propheteia* (prophecy); *diakriseis pneumatōn* (discernment of spirits) and *genē glōssōn* (speaking in tongues) and *hermēneia glōssōn* (interpretation of tongues). The complementary nature of these gifts listed alludes to their intended design for the *ekklēsia*: to elicit interdependence and to unify Christ-believers. Paul gives a rhetorical flourish to his explanation using the phrase *to hen pneuma* ("the one Spirit") and *to auto pneuma* ("the same Spirit"). He thus implies that the Spirit is the bedrock of church unity. This one and the same Spirit picks up the theme of the *nous Christou*. Collins reiterates this: "…The Spirit … [is the] unifying and dominant theme."[146] The Spirit is the animating principle in the *ekklēsia*, especially of the *nous Christou*; and it is also the source of all ecclesial gifts. Pointedly, division is baseless and incongruous with the idea of the *ekklēsia*, because it is not founded on the one and the same Spirit. Oneness implies unity and cohesion. Unity and cohesion are only possible because of the *ekklēsia*'s ontological character: the *nous Christou*.

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[144] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 450.

[145] This is not necessarily a Trinitarian formula, but it underscores Paul's understanding of a divine principle at work in the *ekklēsia* that later evolved into a proclamation of faith.

[146] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 449.

Another integral phrase in Paul's description of the Spirit's authorship of the charisms in the *ekklēsia* is: *he phanerōsis tou pneumatos pros to sumpheron* ("the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good"). This translation retains two crucial aspects of Paul's treatise on the meaning and purpose of the spiritual gifts: first, the gifts are manifestations of the Spirit; second, they are given for the building up of the *ekklēsia*. These points recall the *nous Christou*: Spirit-inspired and *ekklēsia*. Paul's choice of the term "manifestation" means that the spiritual gifts reveal God's Spirit.[147] I will now examine Paul's metaphor of the human body in clarifying the operation of the spiritual gifts. Paul likens the presence of the spiritual gifts in the *ekklēsia* to that of the members of the body. He delineates the interdependence of the parts of the human body, their compensation for each other's weaknesses, and solidarity. Paul's metaphor is tendentious: it builds up steadily to his final statement— "You are the body of Christ" (1 Cor 12:27). Collins says that the human body was widely used as an image of social unity.[148] Apart from the commonplace affirmation of this analogy, Collins notes that Paul's use of this widespread metaphor has some peculiar twists: first, Paul attributed the diversity in the body to God and not to nature; second, his emphasis was on using the varied gifts for the common good; third, he stressed the interdependence of all the members.[149] In addition to this, Paul also says that the weak parts are indispensable (1 Cor 12:22). The *nous Christou* foregrounds Paul's nuance: the Spirit (God) and *ekklēsia* (common good).

Paul makes another important point: solidarity. The parts of the body are not only interdependent, but they support and identify with each other's experience. Paul, by adding this

[147] Paul alludes to this role of spirits in general: "For though absent in body, I am present in spirit…" (1 Cor 5:3); and "when you are assembled, and my spirit is present with the power of our Lord Jesus" (1 Cor 5:4). Paul evidently speaks of the spirit as the principle of making one who is physically absent concretely present. This logic applies Christ as well.

[148] The metaphor of the human body as a model of social unity is widely attested in Greco-Roman literature and politics. Paul simply adapts this widespread analogy to explicating the functioning of the spiritual gifts. Collins, *First Corinthians*, 458-459.

[149] Ibid., 460.

twist, sets the stage for his discourse on love, the defining characteristic of a Spirit-inspired *ekklēsia* (1 Cor 13:13). Solidarity is a crucial concept for Paul, because it is the pivot of the *ekklēsia*. Paul's prioritization of the spiritual gifts is not according to any intrinsic value, but their impact on the *ekklēsia* (1 Cor 14:3-5). All gifts are assessed in relation to the building up of Christ's body. Paul's verdict is: "You are the body of Christ (*sōma Christou*) and individually members of it" (1 Cor 12:27). Paul's use of the emphatic phrase *humeis este* (you are) alludes to his point at the beginning of the letter: "But we have the mind of Christ." From this exposition of the spiritual gifts, the following can be observed: the diversity of the spiritual gifts is meant for ecclesial unity; the gifts help to build up the *ekklēsia*; the diversity of spiritual gifts manifests the Spirit; and the variety of the gifts fosters interdependence. These effects spring from the Spirit's operation in the *ekklesia*: the *nous Christou*. The *nous Christou* is not identical to the *ekklēsia* but is deeply engrained in its nature as Christ's body.

Summary

The word that underlies all the issues treated is *ekklēsia*. Paul's worry for the *ekklēsia* cannot be overstated. The *ekklēsia* connects the *nous Christou* to the incidents tackled by Paul. The *ekklēsia* is the locus where the *nous Christou* is found and experienced. I have argued here that the *nous Christou* foregrounds Paul's replies. It is a Spirit-inspired, Christ-like mindset that ontologically marks the *ekklēsia* as Christ's body. The observable effect of possessing the *nous Christou* is the manifestation of the Lord's presence in the *ekklēsia*: this entails a way of life and a decision-making process that conforms to the gospel of the crucified Lord. I have also delineated the schematics of Paul's responses: issue, explanation, metaphor, and verdict. This scheme is not a fossilized mold; rather, it is a blueprint for a rhetorical reading of Paul's replies. His arguments always presuppose the *nous Christou* (as an ontological character of the *ekklēsia*). In the case of division, Paul rules on the subject using these statements: "You are

God's field and God's building," and "You are the temple of God's Spirit." The division in the *ekklēsia* is counteracted by Paul's metaphor of unity and stability: building. This image reminds the *ekklēsia* that it has been made one in Christ. Thus factions are self-serving and baseless. On immorality, Paul mandates the *ekklēsia*: "Drive out the wicked person from among you!" This instruction is founded on the realization that the *ekklēsia* is Christ's body, and as such, cannot condone immorality. The *ekklēsia* is one with Christ; it makes Christ visible through its unwavering commitment to Christ crucified. Harboring such an immoral person jeopardizes the *ekklēsia*'s identity and witness. It also avails the miscreant the opportunity for conversion.

Pertaining to food offered to idols, Paul does not condemn the eating of meat, but the lack of consideration for the vulnerable ones in the *ekklēsia*. Sensitivity is Paul's solution for food offered to idols. The *nous Christou* thus inspires other-centeredness. It also empowers recognition of others as brothers and sisters for whom Christ died. Regarding the abuse of the Lord's Supper, Paul writes: "When you come together to eat, wait for one another." Paul rightly perceives the problem: lack of consideration for others. The wealthier members were not waiting for the poorer ones. Consideration for others teaches solidarity and unity. Paul's claim on the spiritual gifts is similar. Here, he says: "You are the body of Christ." Being the body of Christ means being united, acting as one, respecting everyone, helping one another, and supporting each other. The *nous Christou*, being an ontological mark that characterizes the *ekklēsia*, is the source of Christ-like living. It underlies Paul's assessments and judgments regarding the *ekklēsia*; it empowers the *ekklēsia* to concretely manifest Christ; and it guarantees unity and fosters mutual respect and community building. Whenever Paul has the *ekklēsia* in view or issues related to it, the *nous Christou* is inevitably implied.

CONCLUSION

In this work, I set out to prove three theses: first, that Paul's employment of the phrase *nous Christou* cannot simply and solely be attributed to the influence of Greek philosophy (as many exegetes argue); second, that the *nous Christou* can be defined as a Spirit-inspired, Christ-like mindset that ontologically characterizes the *ekklēsia* as Christ's body; and third, that the *nous Christou* underlies all of Paul's responses to the issues perturbing the *ekklēsia* at Corinth. Each of these theses was addressed in chapters one, two, and three respectively. In chapter one, I surveyed the use of *nous* in the LXX, Middle Platonism, Philo, Josephus, and Neoplatonism. The survey produced the following results: first, the LXX and Josephus used *nous* identically (i.e., mindset and understanding); and second, Middle Platonism, Philo, and Neoplatonism used *nous* in a similar way (i.e., as a Demiurge or divine substance in humans). In chapter two, I observed that *nous* had two basic senses in Paul and in the NT: mindset and understanding. These senses are consistently employed except for Rom 7:23, 25 and 1 Cor 2:16. In Rom 7, *nous* is given a special nuance—the human understanding (faculty of reasoning) of the Adamic person; while in 1 Cor 2:16 *nous* refers to a Spirit-inspired, Christ-like mindset that ontologically characterizes the *ekklēsia* as Christ's body. In chapter three, I argued that since Paul's priority in all his responses was the *ekklēsia*, the *nous Christou* as an ontological feature of the *ekklēsia*, underlies these replies. While Paul does not repeat the phrase *nous Christou*, it foregrounds all of Paul's discussion concerning the assembly.

Hence, I am making these claims: first, Paul's use of the *nous Christou* is influenced by multiple traditions (the LXX, Hellenistic philosophy, and his literary ingenuity); second, the *nous Christou* is not simply a mindset or the Spirit, but is a Spirit-inspired, Christ-like mindset that ontologically characterizes the *ekklēsia* as Christ's body; and third, the *nous Christou* is the source of communal transformation in First Corinthians. This means that the hasty and banal attribution of Paul's employment of *nous Christou* to Hellenistic philosophy

must be jettisoned as unconvincing. Rather, Paul's terminology (*nous*) syncs with the LXX, while his peculiar nuance (Spirit-inspired) aligns with Greek philosophy. Regarding the meaning of *nous Christou*, it must be clearly stated here that the decision is not an either-or, but a both-and. The *nous Christou* is not merely "the Spirit," because in 1 Cor 14 Paul demonstrates the distinction between *nous* and *pneuma*; in the same vein, the concept does not simply denote "mindset," because Paul uses it in the context of discussing the Spirit's role in the *ekklēsia*. Instead, *nous Christou* is Paul's ingenious coalescing of the LXX's *nous* and Hellenistic philosophy's *nous* so as to communicate the Spirit's unique role in the life of the *ekklēsia*. The *nous Christou* is also the source of communal transformation, because it is an ontological quality of the *ekklēsia* that characterizes it as Christ's body. As such, it is always implicit in Paul's responses, because it is the very nature of the *ekklēsia*. This becomes more apparent when the structure of Paul's responses is critically and carefully examined.

This synopsis could be extended to the other Pauline letters, because the foundation for this assertion is Paul's consistent idea of the *ekklēsia* and the ontological nature of the *nous Christou*. In that project, the socio-religious milieu of Paul can be widened to include his historico-political milieu as well. In such a broadened academic and literary environment, Paul's *nous* can be explored against a historical and political backdrop, thereby explicating the usage of the concept in other forms of secular literature. Lastly, this thesis is heavily dependent on a rhetorical and literary reading of First Corinthians (and the other Pauline letters). Subsequent studies of the *nous Christou* can focus on other forms of biblical criticism.

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